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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

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# BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

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EDUCATOR AND INTERRACIAL INTERPRETER

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*by* BASIL MATHEWS

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS - CAMBRIDGE - 1948

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λαμπάδια ἔχοντες διαδώσουσιν ἀλλήλοις

DEDICATED  
TO THE PRESIDENT, FACULTY,  
ALUMNI, ALUMNAE, AND STUDENTS  
OF  
TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

*"To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high."*





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## PREFACE

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Talking about Booker T. Washington with the world-famous Negro agricultural scientist, the late George Washington Carver, in his laboratory at Tuskegee Institute, rekindled my sense of distress that the enduring significance of that inventive educator and interracial interpreter and of the full splendor of his gift to the world should be in danger of partial eclipse. The spectacular brilliance and rugged saintliness of Carver, the individualist and chemist of genius, make an immediate appeal to everyone. The same can be true of the still greater figure of Booker Washington. He provided Carver, as he did so many others, with the niche in which to develop his priceless gifts to full fruition. In doing so, however, Washington to some degree became hidden, as a creative person, behind the overshadowing mass of his own edifice. It was then that I realized that no rounded, authoritative biography of Booker Washington, covering the whole of his life on a basis of firsthand research and interview, had so far been written. I therefore, after discussion with the authorities at Tuskegee and with their kind promise of collaboration, decided to devote extended time to the project.

Booker Taliaferro Washington's moving autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, was written in 1900; and therefore it contains no record of his achievement during the last fifteen years of incessant activity. The intimate record of Emmett J. Scott, Washington's resourceful and devoted confidential associate, and Lyman Beecher Stowe, grandson of the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, entitled *Booker T. Washington: Builder of a*

*Civilization*, does not, as its authors state, even touch upon his childhood, early training, and education. Both books, however, are of outstanding importance as authoritative sources; my debt to them is here gratefully acknowledged.

Through the kindness of the late Robert Russa Moton and of Frederick Douglass Patterson, Booker Washington's successors in the direction of Tuskegee Institute, I have not only been given access to the voluminous files of Washington's official and personal correspondence at Tuskegee, but, during long, successive periods spent there, have received the illuminating and interpretative guidance of his Director of Research, the late Dr. Monroe Work, and the untiring help of the latter's assistant in typing and checking hundreds of extensive quotations from that correspondence, as well as from newspaper clippings, pamphlets, manuscripts of speeches, and memoranda. That assistance laid the foundations of this book. The fuller knowledge of Tuskegee that it will, I hope, spread to a larger number of people will undoubtedly afford satisfaction to those who gave time so generously in rendering that help. Owing to the deteriorating influence of the hot humid climate of the Deep South, these documents have, since I examined them, been locked up in the archives of the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C. for permanent preservation.

This research among documents has been supplemented by leisurely interviews with unnumbered persons who were closely in touch with Booker Washington and his work. They include surviving members of his family; the remaining members of his Tuskegee faculty, including long intimate talks with George Washington Carver; trustees of the Institute in his day, such as Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, whose little biography published by Hampton Institute in 1936 reflects his intimate knowledge of and affection for Booker Washington; scores of his ex-students; leaders of white opinion in the Deep

South, such as the late Clark Howell, proprietor and editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Dr. W. W. Alexander, creator and for many years Director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, with its headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, and with his successor, Robert B. Eleazer; and the editor of *The Journal of Negro Education*, Dr. Charles H. Thompson, of Howard University, Washington, D.C., who has simultaneously been engaged upon a definitive study of Booker Washington's policy and practice of education. Leading constructive critics of Booker Washington's policy, such as the late President John Hope and Dr. W. Burghardt DuBois, both of Atlanta University, Georgia, with Professor Alain Locke and others at Howard University, have notably contributed not only facts but elements toward arriving at a critical appraisal of Washington's total contribution to the world.

Considerable time spent among the workshops and laboratories of Tuskegee, its cattle-sheds and chicken-runs, its agricultural nurseries, lecture rooms, and chapel, as well as visits into the cotton belt with its primitive Negro farmer cabins and its rural schoolhouses and churches, have helped to give a realistic sense of the background of Booker Washington's creative work.

Long periods of living with colored students and their teachers in, for instance, Atlanta University, Georgia, as well as in Tuskegee, have given insights into those deeper bitter-nesses and longings which so many white people, who live for long years near them but never with them, fail to see. During more than a decade of teaching in Boston University and Andover Newton Theological School, intimate conversations with Negro students shed further light on racial tensions.

More than a third of a century spent in studying at close quarters in different continents crucial problems in interracial relations has helped me to see the lifework of Booker Washington in its global perspective as well as against its historic

background. This setting has also been of assistance in narrating, toward the end of the book, the intense and at times bitter controversy in which his policy has been assailed by numerous Negro and white reformers, and in attempting an appraisal in the light of that still lively debate. This book, therefore, in addition to its venture toward providing the first authoritative and comprehensive record of Booker T. Washington's life, essays to estimate as justly as may be his specific function as educator and interracial interpreter in the larger landscape of the present and the future. Across the world of tomorrow the problem of interracial relations is everywhere baffling. The spirit and principles with which it is approached will be decisive as to mankind's success or failure in pursuing a program toward its solution. Booker Washington's lifelong encounter with those issues sheds clear light along that path.

The publication of this book by the Harvard University Press is gratifying and, in a deeper sense, peculiarly fitting in that Harvard University was the first American university to recognize Booker Washington's greatness by conferring upon him its honorary Master of Arts degree.

My wife has not only carried through the considerable labor of typing the whole manuscript, but has brought her skill in constructive appraisal to bear upon every part of it.

I am indebted to Oswald Garrison Villard for permission to quote extracts from his letters to Booker Washington.

In order to carry still further the aim that led to this undertaking, the author is at work upon a shorter interpretation of Booker Washington's life and work for the boys and girls of today, to whom the bracing stimulus of his virile, adventurous life is so largely unknown.

BASIL MATHEWS

UNION COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
VANCOUVER, CANADA

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## PROLOGUE

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When a biographer sets himself to discover and present not only facts about a man like Booker T. Washington but the hidden drama of character and motive as he played his outstanding role, he is constantly baffled in his effort to sustain a true perspective between the man and his setting in the larger human scene. Sir Sidney Lee, the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography, gave his definition of the difference between history and biography when he wrote, "The historian sees men in the mass as through binoculars: the biographer sees persons as through a microscope." This distinction is, however, too absolute. For, in the case of Booker Washington, for example, we have to see the man in his historic setting or we do not really see him at all. To record the career of such a man in the context of sustained tension in race-relations demands, on the one hand, a close-up picture of the man, and, on the other hand, a justly drawn vista of his historical background. To adapt Sir Sidney Lee's metaphor, such a biographer must wear bifocal glasses, and must use both the "distance" and "close-up" parts of the lenses in constant alternation.

The writer must, nevertheless, always remember that the character and exploits of the man himself are central; he is not attempting to write history illuminated by personalities, but biography in the setting of history. As Lytton Strachey said, in his Preface to *Eminent Victorians*, "Human beings are too important to be treated as mere symptoms of the past. They have a value which is independent of any temporal processes—which is eternal, and must be felt for its own sake."

A persistent temptation for anyone telling the life story of Booker Washington arises just because the man was so single-minded and dedicated himself with such passionate persistence to one aim: the writer may be lured into losing the man in his mission. Fortunately, this biographer's intimate and leisurely talks in the Deep South with so many men and women who knew Booker Washington "in his habit as he was" have created too vivid a consciousness of his idiosyncrasies and characteristic ways of behavior to allow Washington's achievements to obscure the singular and engaging qualities of his personality. On the other hand, the persistent and at times shrill debate still raging with regard to Washington's exercise of his function as the leader of his race and as mediator between the races, has led to a concentration in the later chapters of this book upon an analysis of this essential function and an appraisal of his enduring place in history.

One more observation may not be out of place before launching into the story of the man. The upheaval of changing civilizations through which the world is passing brings to the fore the question, what are the forces that guide the historic process? This book is written under the conviction that, potent as are the forces of climate, geography, and economics, they do not say the final word in shaping the future. What is commonly called history is largely a record of events; but the events are only the shell, of which the creative kernel is the decisive thinking of persons leading to action. Their acts, based upon their standards of value, create the events that we call history. When Lord Acton said, "Ideas are the cause and not the result of public events," he was stating in his absolute way an essential truth. If this is a true view, it controls an author's mind in writing a biography; for the subject whose character and achievements he is portraying is not a puppet

of circumstance but a creative person whose ideas, guiding his will in action, cause events that are a part of history.

A biographer must rethink the ideas of his subject in his own mind and feel their driving power. He must reenact them in his own consciousness, while at the same time submitting them to objective appraisal. His task is a labor of active and critical thinking. Thomas Carlyle recommended a similar process for the reader when he wrote: "The most profitable employment any book can give us is to study honestly some earnest, deep-minded truth-loving Man, to work our way into his manner of thought, till we see the world with his eyes, feel as he felt and judge as he judged, neither believing nor denying till we can in some measure so feel and judge."



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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

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## THE BOY IN SLAVERY

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Booker Washington was one of the few great men in history who did not know the year of his birth. He died without discovering that he was in fact two to three years older than he believed himself to be. "I was born near a cross-roads post office called Hale's Ford," he wrote in *Up from Slavery*, "and the year was 1858 or 1859." Immediately after his death, in order to set the records straight, inquiry was made of the family on whose plantation in Franklin County, Virginia, the slave boy was born. His brother, John, found in the family Bible that had belonged to James Burroughs, the owner of their slave mother, that the birth of Booker was recorded there on April 5, 1856.<sup>1</sup>

In a fourteen-by-sixteen-foot log cabin on the Burroughs plantation, one mile east of Rocky Mount on Route 40, the brown-skinned baby was born to his darker-colored, husbandless, young slave mother. Booker, like his elder brother, John, was half-white and half-Negro; his father was believed to be a white man living on a neighboring plantation. The white father, as was the custom, took no responsibility for his children born of the young Negro woman of the slave quarters.

The cabin, loosely built with many cracks between the logs, and with no glass in the window openings, was a drafty den in winter. The floor was of bare earth, uncovered save for a small square of boards in the center. These boards hid

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<sup>1</sup> The Bible was carried to Tuskegee Institute and was destroyed in a fire.

a deep hole in the floor in which a supply of sweet potatoes was stored during the winter. Only the foundation of the cabin and some stones of the chimney have survived.

Among the boy's earliest recollections was that of watching his mother, Jane Burroughs, as she was called, at her onerous task as "plantation cook." She fried over an open fireplace in the tiny cabin. The heat, he recalled, was almost unbearable in the torrid Virginia summer days. She prepared the monotonous diet of corn and pork for the slaves, and also cooked in "the big house" the more varied food of the white owners. Mr. Burroughs had a total of only ten slaves. The post of plantation cook was universal. Frances Anne Kemble, in her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839*,<sup>2</sup> describes the plantation cook there as working in a cook's shop, where the daily allowance of rice and corn grits was boiled and distributed to the slaves. The reason for this arrangement was to enable the other women slaves, instead of minding their houses and children, to labor all day in the fields, planting, hoeing, or gathering the cotton, rice, or corn harvest.

Not only did Booker Washington never know the year of his birth; he never solved the problem of the origin of his two first names, "Booker" and "Taliaferro". As far back as he could remember anything, he had been called "Booker" by his mother; he did not know why. One unconvincing guess has been made that it sprang from his voracity as a reader of books. This is impossible, for the use of the name went back to the child's earliest recollection, before the idea of reading had dawned upon him, and he was entered by that name in his former owner's Bible.

Hubert Mathews, the author's brother, who spent nearly twenty years in government service in Nigeria in constant

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<sup>2</sup> London and New York, 1863.



intercourse with Hausa-speaking Africans having a Mohammedan background, startled him, while discussing this problem of Washington's first name, by saying, "That is the word that most Mohammedan Nigerian mothers use when calling to their little sons. They will cry *Bukar*—the first syllable being pronounced as in 'book'—just as we might call 'Sonny'. The name *Bukar* is one of the numerous Northern Nigerian derivatives of the Arab name of the first Caliph of Islam, who succeeded Mohammed. His name was Abu-Bakr. It is one of the most common names in use for boys throughout the Mohammedan areas of West Africa."

Further inquiries showed that a considerable number of West African words were, in fact, carried across the Atlantic to America by the captured slaves and were blended with English on the slave plantations both in the West Indies and the southern states of America. Some of these words are still used by their descendants on cotton plantations. American Negroes in some areas of the South will say, "John is *cooking* against the way he is treated." *Kuka* is the word for "complaining" used among Hausa-speaking people in Nigeria, according to the Reverend J. Lowry Maxwell, translator into Hausa for the British and Foreign Bible Society. Names used in the southern United States, such as *Sambo* and *Kwashi*, were, he says, familiar in his Hausa-speaking school in West Africa. *Kwashi* is found in American slave states as *Quashie*, the name, for example, of a character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The Reverend George P. Bargery, author of the outstanding English-Hausa Dictionary, concurs with Lowry Maxwell and Hubert Mathews that an adaptation of the Arab Hausa word *Bukar* is the actual origin of Booker T. Washington's first name.

The second name, Taliaferro, which Washington found in later years that his mother had used soon after he was born

but later dropped, was that of a white man living on a neighboring plantation, although Booker does not seem to have known this. So universal was the blend of white with pure African blood by concubinage begun in the days of slavery by the control of Negro girls by white planters that a majority of the colored people in America today are of mixed blood. The whole responsibility for this, however, does not rest upon the plantation slaveowners. The soldiers of the triumphant northern armies, the hordes of post-war commercial and political exploiters who descended upon the South in the period of so-called "Reconstruction," and the loose life of the growing cities, all made their contribution to the mixed racial parentage of millions of colored people. The torment consequent upon all that early promiscuity did not fall solely upon the Negro. The wife of a Southern planter was, as one of them put it, not so much a wife as "mistress of a seraglio."

Never in the slave period of their boyhood did Booker and his elder brother, John, enjoy in their own home the experience of a family meal. Booker, however, caught glimpses of a civilized social meal as a little boy when he was called to the Burroughs mansion to pull a rope attached to a pulley so that paper fans over the dining table would scare the flies from the food and cool the air. To this boy, accustomed to eating a sweet potato and a scrap of fried meat held in his fingers while running about or sitting on the doorstep of his cabin, it was a revelation to see the whole family (James Burroughs had thirteen children) enjoying lively talk while seated together round a large table laden with good food served on china plates from silver dishes. The little slave boy's quick eye took in all the details of the scene which made so lasting an impression that it influenced his training of thousands of boys and girls later on.

Such occasions as this, too, stimulated the boy's desire to dig into the origins and achievements of his own race.

I can remember as a slave, he wrote in *The Story of the Negro* hearing snatches of conversation from the people at the "Big House" from which I learned that the great white race in America had come from a distant country, from which the white people and their forefathers had traveled in ships across a great water, called the ocean. As I grew older I used to hear them talk with pride about the history of their people, of the discovery of America, and of the struggles and heroism of the early days when they and their ancestors were fighting the Indians and settling up the country. All this helped to increase, as time went on, my desire to know what was back of me, where I came from, and what, if anything, there was in the life of my people in Africa and America to which I might point with pride and think about with satisfaction.

I learned that my mother's people had also come from across the water, but from a more distant, more mysterious land. To most of the slaves the "middle passage," as the journey from the shore of Africa to the shore of America was called, was merely a tradition of confused and bewildering experience. Nothing but the vaguest notions remained at the time when I was a boy, even among the older people, in regard to the mother country of my race.

In slavery days, the traditions of the people who lived in the cabins centered almost entirely about the lives and fortunes of the people who lived in "the Big House."<sup>3</sup>

The white folk were oblivious of the fact that young Booker's quick ears were drinking in the talk of the family, catching the echoes of movements going on in the larger world. They were not oblivious, however, of the alert, able-bodied boy's potential value. The Court Records of Franklin County (Will Book 12, page 150) has a list of ten slaves of James Burroughs with their assessed value. Booker was priced at \$400, his elder brother, John, at \$550, and his little sister, Amanda, at \$200, while Jane, their mother, was valued at \$250.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. I (New York: 1909).

Many today take it for granted that any deviation from the traditional broad-nosed, thick-lipped type among American Negroes necessarily reveals an intermixture of white blood. This is not so. Many African racial types of varying color and facial bone-structure came over in the slave ships; some short and thickset, with the familiar flat nose and thick lips, and blue-black skin; others tall and wiry with the arched nose, thin lips, and lighter brown skin that betrayed Hamitic or Arab strains. The slave raiders in Africa combed an immense range of territory for their human booty. Some tribes were pagan animists, others were Mohammedan monotheists. Some boasted princely heritage, while others were of lower status, with a slave ancestry even in their own country. On the plantations of America all these were thrown into the common pool of slave labor.

Another error is the belief that the African was living in a state of chaotic savagery. Melville J. Herskovits, in his *The Myth of the Negro Past*,<sup>4</sup> amasses evidence that slave raiding broke up a well-organized and intricate economy pattern, a well-developed political system organized around local group centers, and vigorously developed arts including folk legends, sculpture, music, and dancing. Persuasive evidence is advanced to show that Africans were the world's first workers in iron. Beauty and utility are finely blended in their pottery, weaving, carving, and hut-building, while Africa has justly been called "the continent of music," and the symbolism of her intricate dancing still awaits adequate interpretation.

Some of this was carried into America, in spite of the remorseless smashing of the delicate pattern of African community life. A realistic analysis of the civilization of the southern states in Booker Washington's boyhood shows that prac-

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<sup>4</sup> New York: Harper, 1941.

tically all the skilled ironwork, much of it of high artistry, was done by slave blacksmiths, and that Negroes were the craftsmen whose work decorated the often splendid mansions of the planters, of which they were not infrequently the builders. One of the few entirely original and apparently immortal art-forms created in the western hemisphere is the Negro spiritual. The destruction of the civilization and the sensitive community life of the African is a responsibility which rests almost wholly upon white shoulders. To argue, from the measure of chaos and decadence into which American Negro community life and culture were thrown in the days of slavery, that the colored man comes from inferior stock is a generalization that blends arrogance with ignorance.

The Christian faith spread swiftly among the Negroes whose fathers had come from Africa as pagan animists. In their own church and its services the colored slaves found the only channel of spontaneous self-expression that was open to them. No part of their life took the place of the lost African tribal consciousness as did the happy hymn singing, the prayers, explosive with emotion, and the fervid preaching which characterized their Christian services. The Negro minister, although himself generally with only the most rudimentary education, became a kind of chief to whom the slaves looked for leadership. The preaching pointed largely to the glories of freedom in heaven, as did many of the spirituals which they sang. But that emotion was not mere escapism. It helped to keep alive the passion for freedom in this world. Although moral laxity persisted, even among some pastors, the ethical standard of the Negro people perceptibly and continuously rose through the constant working of the Christian leaven.

The will to be free made the Bible the ideal book for the Negro slaves. The slave boy, Booker, joined in with an ec-

static congregation, their bodies swaying in irresistible rhythm, as they sent the strain surging into the darkness:

Go down Moses  
Way down in Egypt-land  
Tell ole Pharaoh  
Let my people go.

As their voices blended in vibrant harmony their hearts were neither in the ancient past of Israel nor in the vague future of the next world; they were aching with unquenchable longing for a leader, a Negro Moses, to lead them out of bondage into freedom,

That longing never died in Booker Washington, and he extended it to the Jew as well as to the Negro. When he was fifty-four years old and stood aghast at the Jewish ghetto in Cracow in Poland he was carried back to his own slave boyhood by his sense of similar suffering. This led him, as he dictated his experiences in Europe for *The Man Farthest Down*, to give an unforgettable picture of how Moses had dawned on his consciousness when he was a little slave boy on the Virginia plantation:

To my childish mind the most fascinating portion of the first book I knew, the Bible, was the story of the manner in which Moses led the children of Israel out of the house of bondage, through the wilderness, into the Promised Land. I first heard that story from the lips of my mother, when both she and I were slaves on a plantation in Virginia. I have heard it repeated and referred to many times since. In fact, I am certain that there is hardly a day or a week goes by that I do not meet among my people some reference to this same Bible story.

The Negro slaves were always looking forward to a time when a Moses should arise from somewhere who would lead them, as he led the ancient Hebrews, out of the house of bondage. And after freedom, the masses of the Negro people have still continued to look to some great leader, some man inspired of God,

who would lead them out of their difficulties into the promised land, which, somehow, they never seem to be able to reach.

The stormy revolutionary plots against Russian Tsardom, fomented in Cracow in Austrian Poland and accompanied by the smuggling of rifles, pistols and grenades across the Russian border by "underground" conspirators, recalled to Booker Washington "the stories I had heard when I was a boy from my mother's lips of the American 'Underground Railway' and the adventures of the runaway slaves in their efforts to cross the border between the free and slave states. It reminded me, also, of the wilder and more desperate struggles, of which we used to hear whispers in slavery time, when the slaves sought to gain their freedom by means of insurrection. That was a time when, in the Southern States, no matter how good the relations between the individual master and his slaves, each race lived in constant fear of the other. . . It is fatally true that no community can live without fear in which one portion of the people seeks to govern the other portion through terror."

The small boy would sit drinking in the stories that the older slave men and women told of slave insurrections. One story of Virginia burned itself in on his memory. He heard his fellow-slaves tell of the "Prophet" Nat Turner, whose slave mother had told him that he, like Moses, was to be the deliverer of his race. Grown to manhood and "nursed in the quaint and primitive theology of the plantation hymns, which helped to stimulate the belief in his mission to free his people," he brooded over the condition of the slaves. In 1831 he gathered a force of sixty slaves who, joined by others, slew sixty white people on different plantations. The uprising was crushed after over a hundred slaves had been killed. Twenty were hanged after trial.<sup>5</sup> Later reflection convinced Booker that in no case was

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<sup>5</sup> Booker T. Washington, *The Story of the Negro*, vol. I., pp. 173-175.

any insurrection prompted by a will to revenge but by the passion for freedom developed through contact with the free white men, the stories in the Old Testament, and the reading of school textbooks on the history of democratic peoples.

In the South the white man came to regard physical toil as slaves' work. In an attempt to offset the consequent softening of his own fiber, he filled his time with hunting, horseback-riding, and dueling, interspersed with dances, social visits, and gallantry. The life of the planter's wife was more exacting than that of her husband. At its best it called for versatility and character. She must be a gracious hostess, never thrown off balance by unexpected guests, guiding at the same time the preparations in the kitchen and the work of the seamstresses, bearing children and keeping her hand on the nursery, watching over the children in the slave quarters (frequently the half-breed offspring of her own husband and sons) and directing her daughters' destinies into appropriate family alliances. As Stephen Vincent Benét says in his perfectly balanced picture of "The Mistress of Wingate Hall":

Gentility must keep to gentility  
Where God and breeding had made things stable,  
While the rest of the cosmos deserved civility  
But dined in its boots at the second-table.<sup>6</sup>

No hard and fast caste system separated the different levels in the slaveowning community between the rich and those with smaller incomes because "the traditions of gentility" pervaded them all, although this tolerance did not extend to the white overseers and auctioneers. When Booker was a slave boy not more than 2,300 American owners held more than a hundred slaves each out of the total slave population of over two millions; 87 per cent of the slaveowners possessed less than

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<sup>6</sup> *John Brown's Body* (Copyright 1927, 1928, by Stephen Vincent Benét).



twenty slaves each. James Burroughs, Booker's owner, belonged to this larger group. Washington's recollection was that only six slaves were on the plantation. The local record, however, as we have seen, gives the names of ten, with the assessed value of each. Conditions upon that unusually small plantation were free from the cruelty so frequently associated with the slave system. "My master and his sons," wrote Washington, "all worked together side by side with his slaves. In this way we all grew up together, very much like members of one big family. There was no overseer, and we got to know our master and he to know us."<sup>7</sup>

The Southern cultural pattern contained the good and the evil qualities of its own characteristics. A concentration upon good breeding often lapsed into cruel snobbishness, in which an irritating condescension to inferiors was at times redeemed by a sense of *noblesse oblige*. Open-air sportsmanship flourished alongside heavy drinking. A gay social hospitality developed, coupled with a frequent attainment of essential culture; and yet pervading it all was that subtle atmosphere of decay which has hung over all civilizations propped up by slavery, from those of early Babylonia, Greece and Imperial Rome to that which, in Booker Washington's boyhood, stretched from Baltimore in Maryland to New Orleans on the Gulf of Mexico.

The southern planters at that time argued that they had not invented slavery; they had inherited it. The South, as Jefferson pungently put it, "has the wolf by the ears; it wants to get

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<sup>7</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. I, p. 149. It may be that, in counting the slaves as six, Washington left out his own family of four, which would bring the total to ten.

Mrs. Laura A. Holland, one of James Burroughs' daughters, in a manuscript letter seen by the author, mentioned that she corresponded with Booker's mother as long as the latter lived, and later with John and Booker at Tuskegee, receiving from them "letters, catalogues and papers concerning their Normal and Industrial School."

rid of it, but dare not let go!" In the actual administration of slavery on such plantations as that on which Washington was born, the balance sheet of the slave states had heavy items on the debit side, but could write respectable items to its credit also.

A glimpse of that abyss of decadence into which slaveholding drags the owner is given by the advertisements published during Booker Washington's boyhood in southern newspapers, not only for the sale of slaves, but for the return of runaway slaves. Knowing, as his master often did, that the slave's wife or mother or children had been sold to another owner, the anguished longing of the slave for his or her own kin was used as a trail to aid in the hunt. Here are three out of uncounted examples of such cold-blooded advertisements that could be culled from the newspapers of that period:

One hundred dollars reward will be given for my two fellows, Abram and Frank. Abram has a wife at Colonel Stewart's in Liberty County, and a mother at Thunderbolt, and a sister in Savannah.

William Roberts

Fifty dollars reward. Ran away from the subscriber a Negro girl named Maria. She is of a copper colour, between thirteen and fourteen years of age—bareheaded and barefooted. She is small for her age—very sprightly and very likely. She stated she was going to see her mother at Maysville.

Sanford Thomson.

Fifty dollars reward. Ran away from the subscriber his Negro man Pauladore, commonly called Paul. I understand General R. Y. Hayne has purchased his wife and children from H. L. Pinckney, Esq., and has them now on his plantation at Goose Creek, where, no doubt, the fellow is frequently lurking.

T. Davis.

While never losing sight of the fact that slavery in itself is fundamentally evil, it is possible to assess certain elements in its administration which challenge those responsible for the welfare of workers and their families in areas free from slavery. It is claimed that the normal planter cared for the physical well-being of his slaves at least as well as he did that of his horses. The slaveowners bitterly affirmed that this was more than the northern industrialist at that time could claim for his treatment of his factory employees. The aged slave was cared for when he was too feeble to continue work, which, again, was more than the northern industrialist could claim in regard to his workers. Furthermore, all the relatives of slaves on a well-run humane plantation received care in sickness. Crude and inadequate though this was, northern capitalism did not then even do as much as that for its workers. The children of the planter played merrily with the offspring of the slaves, as Booker Washington recalled; and the white children rejoiced in the beloved company of their black nurse. But the planter would refuse with scorn to allow his children to come anywhere near the boys and girls of the despised white slave dealer, slave auctioneer, slave driver or overseer. The function of these "low-grade" white men was essential to the slave system and yet at the same time felt to be degrading.

The food of the slave was coarse but not skimpy; it was not inferior to that of the average farm-worker in Britain at the time of Booker Washington's birth. Much mutual affection and loyalty grew up between the family of the master and his slaves. A brilliant southern politician, Calhoun, went so far as to claim that the historic example of Athens proved that the highest culture is founded upon slavery and that this was to be the ground of America's growth. Governor Hammond of South Carolina affirmed in 1835 that slavery "is the cornerstone of the republican edifice." But the greater voice of

George Washington had affirmed nearly half a century earlier, "I can already see that nothing but the rooting out of slavery can perpetuate the existence of the Union"; while Thomas Jefferson said, "I tremble for my country when I think of the Negro and remember that God is just."

Looking back over that list of items claimed to the credit of the slave system as administered at its best, it will be clear that its merits are those of feudalism: a responsibility of the lord for the serf, a loyalty of the serf to his master, and a sense of community between them so long as the serf stays docile in his subordinate status and accepts benefits not as of right, but as of the generosity of "Lady Bountiful." Nothing in the South today is more pathetic than the clinging of many white folk as well as black to the outworn rags of these feudal draperies.

In this slave world, with its strange blend of coarseness and refinement, human affection and inhuman cruelty, abysmal ignorance and spiritual insight, the boy, Booker Washington, spent his first nine years. During the early period of the Civil War Booker used to ride behind James Burroughs' daughters and their sisters-in-law when they went out driving. He also carried the textbooks of his young white mistresses as far as their schoolhouse door. To catch a glimpse of the white boys and girls in the sunny room at their studies, and to have no school door anywhere to open for himself, tantalized and tormented him. But the day's labor which lay ahead of the small slave boy left no leisure for school. At an early age Booker had to make many trips daily as "water boy" to the slaves working in the fields under the burning sun, carrying them water to quench their thirst; and he had to work with broom and rake to clear the rubbish from the yards.

Most dreaded and detested task of all, every week he was obliged to convey a sack of corn to the mill some three miles

away through the woods, wait while the miller ground it, and then take it back to be used in the next week's cooking. The seven- or eight-year-old boy was set dizzily on the back of a horse, with a sack of grain heavier than himself slung uncertainly across its shoulders in front of him. In nine trips out of ten the sack became so unbalanced that it slid off, carrying with it dejected little Booker as he vainly tried to keep it from falling. Often he waited for hours before some one happened to come along who would help him to replace the sack. Darkness fell long before his grain was ground at the mill. Added to the terror that, as he was assured, soldier-deserters would cut off the ears of a Negro boy if they found him, was the certainty that on reaching home he would endure at least a chiding and at the worst a thrashing for his tardiness.

Booker's mother was called Jane Burroughs, because slaves often took the surname of their owner's family. According to Mrs. Laura Holland, a daughter of James Burroughs, Jane, as cook in the family, was "an extra good one, neat in dress and cooking, delighted to have her white people appear well." At first glance it may seem that her picture clashes with Booker's recollection of the crude and down-at-heel condition of Jane's own cabin and the haphazard, scrappy feeding their mother provided for the two boys and their little sister, Amanda, daughter of the Negro husband whom she married early in the Civil War. Nothing, however, was more common than to discover, side by side, a meticulous copying by the slaves of "white folks' ways" when in the white homes, and a thorough lapse into primitive happy-go-lucky habits in the slaves' own quarters. We may wonder, also, how much time Jane could have spared for the care of her own cabin and family from her double task of plantation cook and cook at the "big house."

The regular routine of corn bread and pork was broken once a week by the little ration of molasses that Jane was al-

lowed to bring to the cabin from the Burroughs mansion each Sunday morning for her three children. Forty years later Booker still recalled the thrill he had felt as a boy over this weekly treat. He shut his eyes while his tiny portion of rich syrup was poured on his tin plate; then, opening his eyes, he tipped the plate at different angles in order to spread the molasses all over it, believing that by so doing it would take longer to eat and would actually be increased in amount.

John had a protective tenderness for his younger brother which continued until death. One moving example of this arose in early boyhood from the fact that the slave boys were clothed in coarse shirts made from the refuse of flax. To put on a new shirt was agonizing, for the points of the flax pierced and scratched the skin unbearably. John would don Booker's new shirt and wear down the points on his own skin. These shirts were the only garments the boys wore, summer and winter.

Booker Washington writes of "a time when I was awakened one morning, before the break of day, by my mother bending over me, where I lay on a bundle of rags in the corner of my master's kitchen, and hearing her pray that Abraham Lincoln and his soldiers might be successful and that she and I might some day be free."<sup>8</sup> At that moment the small boy caught his first glimpse of what it might mean to be free. Again and again he heard conversations between the slaves in low whispers far into the night as to the fortunes of the Civil War. Through the still unexplained intricacies of their "grape vine" the Negro slaves often secured news of great battles some time before their masters.

Three young men of the Burroughs family went as soldiers in the Confederate Army. While the slaves longed for the tri-

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<sup>8</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. II, p. 5.

umph of "Linkum's Army" of the North, they mourned, with deep sincere grief, the death of Will Burroughs in battle. Booker knew that some of the older boys had played with "Mars' Billy," as they called him. Some of them had been released from a thrashing with the great slave whip because "Mars' Billy" had pleaded for them. Two other sons of James Burroughs' were brought back to the plantation wounded. Slaves eagerly asked, Booker Washington recalled, to be allowed to sit up all night to nurse them. When all the white men were away from the plantation it was regarded by a slave as a distinction to be called in to protect the women and girls of the house. As Washington said, "Anyone attempting to harm 'Young Mistress' or 'Old Mistress' during the night would have had to cross the dead body of the slave to do so." But this feudal loyalty did not lessen by an iota the longing for freedom.

A deep ground swell of anticipation surged slowly through the plantations as the armies of the South were driven back and the day of inevitable surrender by General Lee drew nearer. The passion that the spirituals, or the Songs of Sorrow, as Dr. W. E. B. DuBois prefers to call them, expressed for freedom in the next world threw off its cloak and echoed the will to freedom in this world. Booker, young though he was, caught a bolder lilt in the singing at night in the slave quarters. Freely the Negroes said to one another as they sang "Go down Moses" that "Massa Linkum" was sending his forces down into the Egypt of the South to make the slave-owner "Let my people go"; and that, under the drive of General Grant's campaigns, as he "fit de battle o' Jericho, de walls came tumblin' down."

One evening word went round the slave quarters that all should gather at the "big house." Jane Burroughs gathered her little brood together and led them to the front of the house.

Booker looked into the saddened faces of his master, James Burroughs, and his family as they assembled on the veranda. A government official read the Emancipation Proclamation.

"You are all free; you can go where you please," he said to the little group of Negro men, women and children. Tears of joy ran down the face of Booker's mother as she stooped to kiss John and Booker and little Amanda.

The hour of all the centuries had come: they were free.



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### "THAT UNTRAVELL'D WORLD"

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At that hour in 1865 when "emanicipation" was announced to the slaves in front of the "big house," Booker was nine years of age. The scene, however, burned itself in on his memory, not only in its dramatic expression, but in the subtler changes of emotion. What in his later years he called "wild scenes of ecstasy" broke out among the slaves. He remembered how they sang; they danced; they laughed and shouted and clapped each other on the back. Then they moved back slowly and thoughtfully to their cabins.

Even as they walked back the sensitive intuition of that small boy caught a swift change taking place in the undertones of his mother's spirit. Free—yes; but to do what? By what means was she to support life, to sustain a home, to bring up her children? How was she to feed and clothe their bodies, to train their minds, to launch them into life? She was free; but she possessed no skill beyond that of simple cookery. She had no money, and no home; she was illiterate, as were her children. Like all the other ex-slaves she owned no tools or land. The shackles of slavery were suddenly struck from the hands and feet of herself and her children; but the government that liberated the slave had put no thought into training or equipping the race for the responsibilities of free citizenship.

The Negro had not only been robbed of the exercise of freedom through the centuries of slavery, but had been kept in illiterate ignorance and deprived of any opportunity of exercising powers of decision, judgment or initiative. Only a tiny

minority were trained in skills in the use of tools by which to support life through free labor, whether on the land or in the workshop. Freedom was thrust upon the Negroes overnight by a government which, in the life or death agony of civil war, had never clearly realized the intolerable yoke that the Emancipation Declaration would fasten upon the Negroes' backs, nor the catastrophic dislocation that it was bound to effect in the whole southern economy which had for hundreds of years rested primarily upon slave labor.

Dimly Jane Burroughs and the other freed slaves saw the shadow already beginning to creep across the sunny landscape of liberty. And the little boy, Booker, with that almost uncanny gift of intuitive understanding which was to mark his whole life, saw the gloom beginning to affect the spirits of the older folk. As, on that first evening of freedom, he watched some of the older slaves going quietly, almost surreptitiously, in the twilight to the "big house" to hold quiet consultations with "Massa," he was taking his first lesson in the problem that was to absorb all his insight and energy of body, mind and spirit throughout his life.

Those talks between the freed Negroes and the owner of the plantation ended in the white man inviting them to continue to live on the plantation as wage laborers. The owner would provide them with the use of land, some seed and simple tools. He was to be paid back later out of the crop that they would raise. Without this improvised arrangement, carried through by hundreds of plantation-owners, many of the freed slaves must have starved and the plantations gone uncultivated. Chaos and lawlessness would have been inevitable. Yet, on the other hand, the unintended result was to rivet on the Negro the new economic shackles of what became the sharecropper system, which still prevails among Negroes and "poor whites" in parts of the southern states.

Booker Washington, young though he was, could not help wondering, he tells us, what was to become of his mother and himself, his elder brother, John, and his little sister, Amanda, in that troubled insecure free world for which he and his were so entirely unprepared. Before we watch him being shaped and disciplined for the role of high national leadership of white as well as colored people that he was to fill, it is necessary briefly to look across the whole stage upon which he was to play his momentous part. It is necessary to get into just perspective the interplay of the stormy forces that had already clashed in the Civil War, and of the sordid injustices and corrupt despotisms that were about to inflame so great a fury of resentment in the post-war period of so-called "Reconstruction." These cumulative forces were to make any reconciliation between North and South seem impossible, and any coöperation of white and black in a common program for the development of the Negro race almost inconceivable. That double tension was to create the lifelong ordeal that beset Booker Washington.

Although the American people were united under one Constitution, and although the white population came at that time largely from North European stock, they suffered an inner division. For Northerners and Southerners had not only been molded into two sharply divergent national patterns of life, but had sailed from Britain and North Europe to the American colonies driven by sharply divergent impulses.

Most of the thirty thousand folk in New England in 1650 wished to establish a state controlled by the will of a righteous God under whose rule all men were equal. They developed no great estates, but steadily, with their own strong hands, carved small farms out of the rocky land. They courageously developed overseas commerce, and built strong mercantile towns in each of which the church and its schools were central.

The population of the southern colonies was mainly of the middle class, with numerous mechanics and clerks; their leaders, however, unlike the New Englanders, were not ministers or farmers or merchants, but sprang from the royalist aristocracy of England. The younger sons of English aristocrats sailed up the estuary of the James River and developed estates in Virginia for themselves and their descendants, as stately as those which the elder sons inherited at home. After the Restoration, when the Stuart kings, Charles the Second and James the Second, were on the throne, these emigrants received large grants of territory in Virginia in the same way that their ancestors had received estates at the king's hand in England, under the legal doctrine that land not in private ownership belonged to the king. In startling contrast to Puritan New England, they developed plantations on which the owner did no manual work, the labor being performed in the earlier days by delinquent white men deported from England. The growth of the plantation system in the southern states coincided with the importation of Negro slaves. The first African slaves in the American colonies had been landed by a Dutch ship at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Some of these Negroes became free, while others remained slaves. Slavery was not formally recognised as legal in Virginia until 1661. By 1715 the slaves numbered about 58,000; sixty years later the total had risen only to half a million; but in the next twenty-five years that number was doubled. Some of the slaves came, especially in the early days, from the islands of the West Indies which had earlier imported them from Africa.

The swift growth in the number of slaves imported into the American colonies was due to the new hunger of Europe and Britain for four vegetable products which could not be grown in their own climate. These were tobacco, sugar, rice and cotton.

Western man first saw tobacco being smoked in the pipes of American Indians. In 1618 twenty pounds of it were sent to England. In 1770 the total export to England ran to 53,000,000 pounds.

In 1793 Eli Whitney invented the first machine for cleaning cotton of the seeds, and the export of cotton leaped from 192,000 pounds in 1791 to 6,000,000 pounds in 1795. The plantations of the southern states exported 85,000,000 pounds of cotton in 1810, and thirty years later these Negro-worked lands were providing two-thirds of the total cotton of the world. The plantation-owners of Virginia even took to breeding slaves like cattle to sell at high prices to the Alabama cotton planters. The economy of the Deep South was harnessed to slavery.

The northern colonists, although priding themselves on freedom from slavery, made vast fortunes as shipowners engaged in the slave trade. Merchants in England trading in slaves from Liverpool and Bristol also amassed great wealth. They ran an immensely profitable "triangle tour," carrying cheap trash and gin southward from Britain to West Africa; then slaves westward from Africa to the West Indies and the American colonies, this being the "middle passage" referred to by Booker Washington; and, lastly, tobacco, rice, and other goods north-eastward from America to Britain.

It is difficult now to comprehend the enthusiasm then felt by numerous sincere eighteenth century Christian people for the slave trade. Many of these convinced themselves that they carried out an indirect evangelism by bringing men, women, and children out of the darkness of pagan Africa into the light of the English colonies in North America. Others held dogmatically, as do some Boer farmers still in South Africa, that Jehovah had decreed unending servitude for the black man under white domination. As Captain Ball, in Stephen Vincent

Benét's *John Brown's Body*,<sup>1</sup> says to his young mate in the cabin of his slave ship:

"I get my sailing orders from the Lord."  
He touched the Bible. "And it's down there, Mister,  
Down there in black and white—the sons of Ham—  
Bondservants—sweat of their brows." His voice trailed off  
into texts. "I tell you, Mister," he said fiercely,  
"The pay's good pay, but it's the Lord's work, too.  
We're spreading the Lord's seed—spreading his seed—"

Thus the devout captain gave point to the biting satire hidden in his sailors' chanty:

Captain Ball was a Yankee slaver,  
Blow, blow, blow the man down!  
He traded in niggers and loved his Saviour,  
Give me some time to blow the man down!

Between the slave states of the South and the states of the true North lay the middle states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York, which concentrated upon overseas commerce and vigorous farming. The numerous Negro slaves in these middle, or buffer, states had a quite different function from that of the slaves in the South. They were not used on the farms, where the German, Swedish and Scotch-Irish owners wrested riches from the soil with their own sinew, but were house- and garden-slaves working on the manorial estates of the rich merchants or in the kitchens and stables of the cities. These buffer states swung slowly but steadily toward the view that slavery should be ended.

Open conflict at length seemed to become inevitable when representatives of the two opposing attitudes to slavery began to move westward. Were the newly-opened areas of settlement to be slave states or free? The controversy precipitated

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<sup>1</sup> Copyright 1927, 1928, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

by those converging paths of westward pioneering from South and North hastened the disaster of civil war and created problems to the solution of which Booker Washington gave his life. When he was a five-year-old slave, the southern guns in Charleston Harbor fired the first shot in the war that was, at long last, to set the boy, with all his race, free.

Slavery was abolished by this war at a fearful cost: the death of almost five hundred thousand young Americans, and the reduction of the South to an economic wreck; with venomous hates engendered by the war and its tragic sordid aftermath of exploitation, corruption, and chaos, leaving fires which have not ceased to smolder.

When General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox, Grant said, "Let your cavalry keep their horses; they will be badly needed on the farms for the sowing." He thus set the course toward reconciliation. Lincoln reëmphasized this, on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, at a Cabinet meeting in Washington when reconstruction of the South was discussed. He said, "We must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union. There is too much of the desire on the part of some of our good friends to be masters, to interfere with and dictate to those States, to treat the people not as fellow-citizens; there is too little respect for their rights. I do not sympathize with these feelings."

Lincoln promised to make a new announcement of that kind to the South. It never was made. That night he was shot in his box at the theater by a half-crazed actor. He had saved the unity of the nation. He had achieved the freedom of the slaves. He died just when his resolve, uttered only a month before his death, needed to be put into practice: "With malice toward none; with charity for all . . . to bind up the nation's wounds. . ."

Lincoln's successor as President, Andrew Johnson, described

as "though right-minded . . . rash, tactless and ill-tempered,"<sup>2</sup> allowed the hotheaded domineering radical leaders to seize the reins of power. They took charge of the "Reconstruction" program with no single creative principle or project. They missed the essential truth, the ignoring of which inevitably wrecks projects of reform, that suddenly to remove external control and direction without developing inner discipline and obedience to principles of justice and tolerance produces chaos and a corrupt new despotism.

Two amendments to the Constitution of the United States at this time were based on just principles. In 1868 the Fourteenth Amendment declared all persons born or naturalized in the United States to be citizens. In 1870 the Fifteenth Amendment declared that the right of those citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Sound though these amendments were, however, the effect, of course, was to give the vote to all the illiterate densely ignorant ex-slaves without any effort being made either to limit the vote of white and colored alike by literacy or other qualifications, or to provide the education which would in the long run give them the capacity to exercise judgment in voting.

A swarm of grafting politicians and commercial adventurers descended upon the South, called "carpetbaggers" because they came laden with baggage and had no roots in the southern soil. Backed by the armed forces that the Federal Government sent down to keep the South under military control, they insisted on the application of the Fifteenth Amendment without any qualifications of fitness to vote, and thus established governments in the different southern states which they controlled through their grip on the votes of the ex-slaves and the "poor

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<sup>2</sup> Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager, *America: The Story of a Free People*, (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1942), page 253.



whites." Historical scholars as objective and informed as Nevins and Commager declare that "the Negro and carpet-bagger governments were probably the worst that have ever been known in any English-speaking land." The influence of better elements in North and South drove them to pass some laws for education and charities that would have been helpful if properly administered; but, as Nevins and Commager go on to say, "They were incompetent, wasteful and corrupt. They squandered money in bucketfuls and laid taxes that impoverished whites were utterly unable to bear. The South for a time was in despair."

The South rallied from its despair. It reacted in three ways. First, the widespread development of the secret terrorist society called the Ku Klux Klan, with its hooded night-riders, inspired such dread by its violence, intimidation, and mystery that many "carpetbaggers" withdrew hurriedly to the North and multitudes of Negroes kept far away from the ballot-box. Secondly, by more subtle, less vehement methods of political chicanery and dexterous cunning, the elections were "rigged" to keep Negroes out of office. The third trend that drove back the evil forces of Reconstruction was that the Negro majority came gradually to loathe playing the part of the tool of crafty industrialists and politicians from the North.

It may be that we are still too close to the "devil's brew" that resulted from this strange conflict of terrorism and deceit versus corruption and exploitation, to make a just and objective appraisal of the rights and wrongs inherent in it. To feel its tragedy is, however, essential to any understanding of Booker Washington and the role that he played. As we shall now see, he was in training for his lifework all through this tormented period. When President Hayes withdrew the armed forces from the South, Washington was a twenty-one-year-old graduate of Hampton Institute, a trained teacher of his own

race. Because of what he was, what he thought and did during the next forty years, he was destined to play a more prominent and, we may even dare to say, a more influential part than any other man in the world, white or colored, in reshaping the relationships of the southern and northern white men toward each other and toward their Negro fellow-citizens. Any attempt to understand his life or to appraise the contribution of his policy and practice to the world will only succeed in so far as we become profoundly and realistically conscious of the terrible results of slavery and Reconstruction.

His destiny was to be worked out at a time when the white man in the South, under a burning sense of injustice, had set himself grimly to build a new economic and political system on a racial caste basis. The northerner was to be prevented from educating or inciting the Negro to rebel against his segregated subordinate status. The southern states were able to pursue this policy by virtue of powers reserved by the Federal Constitution to the separate states.

The moving and truly astonishing drama of Booker Washington's life exercises its spell upon our imagination as we see him moving with his strange blend of wary shrewdness, unswerving courage, "pawky" humor, and cool fortitude across a perilous terrain toward a clearly envisaged, although distant, goal.

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## THE GROWING BOY IN FREEDOM

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In the hours when that subtle but transforming alternation of moods from exuberant joy to chastened reflection came over the freed slaves and dawned upon the consciousness of the illiterate boy, Booker's destiny began to take shape. The door to political liberty was open; but as the Negro walked through it, he felt the shackles of economic poverty. He saw himself landless, tool-less, homeless, as well as without access to food and clothing. The politically freed slave also began to feel the walls of the dungeon of ignorance in which he was locked. He saw, too, that if the white world was regarded as the area of freedom, then he was being barred from it by racial caste walls even more effectively than he had been as a slave. Still more formidable as an obstacle was the fact that no one else could win for him those still unattained freedoms from want, ignorance and fear. This Second Emancipation, as we may call it, must essentially be won, if at all, by the efforts of the Negro himself. Nothing could well have seemed more preposterous than the idea that the sturdy little nine-year-old Booker, valued at four hundred dollars, should become a central figure in and around whom that struggle for change would revolve.

As Professor Robert M. MacIver shows in his essay on "The Historical Pattern of Social Change,"<sup>1</sup> we only discover in-

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<sup>1</sup> *Authority and the Individual* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937), pp. 128-130.

telligible history when we watch a cultural system which in itself, *as a unity*, undergoes processes of change. He goes on to argue that the significance of individuals in the process may not be in the clamor they raise nor in their material splendor, but in the direction and momentum that they give to the change. Dr. MacIver challenges us, in the light of such a test, to decide which was of more importance—Alexander the Great, or Aristotle, his tutor.

In a perspective of this kind we watch the entry of the boy Booker into this historical situation, and, as the story unfolds, test his significance in the still continuing process of change. Booker grew up in a nation tragically divided against itself—both as between North and South, and as between Negro and white. Here, perhaps, light is shed by Arnold Toynbee's analysis of the processes of change in civilization in *A Study of History*. He sees the source of a new civilization when a creative minority, in encounter with obstacles, decisively responds to the challenge that confronts it.

The dice from the outset were loaded against Booker in that contest. His Negro stepfather, Washington Ferguson, who assumed control of the boy after Emancipation, was shiftless, selfish, and short-sighted, and in so far as Booker was concerned, he made all the wrong decisions. From the outset he had been a shadowy and unsatisfactory member of the family. In slavery days he was the serf of the owners of a different plantation from that on which Jane Burroughs lived, and could only at long intervals secure permission to visit his wife and her family. Booker, as a slave, did not see his stepfather more than once a year, generally about Christmas. He disappeared completely during the Civil War. Running away from his owner, Washington Ferguson followed in the track of some soldiers of the Federal Army, reached West Virginia and there settled in a hut in the Kanawha Valley. He earned

a bare livelihood by packing salt from the local "mines" into barrels.

As soon as the Emancipation of the slaves was declared, Ferguson sent a small wagon with a team of mules to his wife, with instructions to bring to him his stepsons, John and Booker, and his own little daughter, Amanda. The mother, helped by her boys, loaded the wagon with the sparse clothing, some bags of corn, and the few kitchen utensils and other goods that she possessed. Young Booker never forgot the shedding of tears as they parted from the Burroughs family—the master on whose plantation the mother and her children had been born and bred as slaves, the mistress in whose kitchen the slave mother had been proud to cook, the daughters whose books Booker had carried to the "white school."<sup>2</sup>

For weeks the children plodded alongside the cart as the mules drew it along devious unmade roads northwestward across the mountains. They slept on the ground under the stars, the mother cooking their simple meals on a wood fire. One day, finding an abandoned log cabin at nightfall, Jane decided to light her fire inside under the stone chimney, and to lay down some sacking on the floor for the family bed. No sooner was the fire well ablaze than an infuriated black snake nearly five feet long dropped writhing down the chimney and raced madly across the floor. The startled little family swiftly evacuated the cabin and slept that night as usual in the open air.

At long last the weary travelers, having entered West Virginia, reached the tiny town of Malden, some five miles from Charleston. The boys soon discovered that the outstanding motive which had led their stepfather to call the family to his side was that he might use their labor for increasing his

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<sup>2</sup> Manuscript letter dated May 9, 1900, from Mrs. Laura A. Holland, daughter of James Burroughs, slaveowner of Booker Washington until 1865.

own sparse earnings. He was a thriftless man, with no strength of character or skill of hand that would fit him to support a home or guide the children.

Booker was crestfallen also to find that the cabin which their stepfather had secured was even more decrepit and primitive than the slave cabin they had left behind. Worse still, the Malden hut, unlike the plantation cabin which stood in an open space with the winds of heaven about it, was herded among many others, all crowded with people and with no sanitary accommodation. The stench was almost unbearable. Degenerate white miners were mixed in with the Negro population. Gambling, immorality, drunken brawls, gross ignorance, and abysmal poverty made the old life of the slave plantation, with its ordered sobriety, seem attractive by comparison.

The population of Malden worked almost entirely at the salt mines, and in particular were occupied with what Booker called "the salt-furnaces." The nine-year-old boy was led by his stepfather to take his share in this labor. He often started out for his morning shift as early as four o'clock.<sup>3</sup> The so-called salt mines actually were bored wells reaching down to subterranean reservoirs of water highly charged with salt. The water was pumped to the surface from the numerous wells into containers built on top of furnaces. The salt first formed on the top and then was precipitated to the bottom of the containers as the water evaporated. The miners scooped out the salt and spread it on a high wooden platform. There it was left to dry for some twenty-four hours. The salt was then packed into barrels. Each barrel was supposed to hold

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the following information on the saltworks and the coal mines was gathered by the author in conversation with James B. Washington, who was adopted by Booker's kind-hearted mother as a younger foster brother to her two boys, and who worked with them.

two hundred and eighty pounds of salt, which had to be hammered into the barrel until the contents were brought up to the required weight. This packing was Booker's first job.

Each of the workers had a number. Washington Ferguson's number was "18." The boy's first lesson in reading came automatically through his recognition of that number as it was chalked by the foreman of the packers each evening on the barrels which Booker had helped his stepfather to fill. At that time he knew nothing of any other figures or letters.

He pestered his mother to get a book for him in which he could learn to read. Not a single Negro in the whole community at Malden at that time was literate. But somehow she contrived to secure a copy of the then nationally-famous little Webster spelling-book, known as the "blue-back." With not a soul who could teach him a single letter, Booker hammered away in his scanty spare time, mastering most of the alphabet. At this time a young Negro from Ohio reached Malden and at once became a center of fascinated attraction to Booker, for he could read. A periodical was ordered and crowds gathered round the young man as he read the news to them. This fired many of the Negroes with the ambition to learn to read. But how could a school be opened without a teacher? At this juncture a veteran Negro soldier of moderate education arrived in Malden. He was persuaded to teach the Negro boys and girls. In return, each family contributed a quota to his wage, and, in addition, each family in rotation was responsible for feeding him for one day. As each mother tried to excel in providing meals on the day when the teacher was due, Booker, as a hungry boy, looked forward, as he said, "with an anxious appetite to the teacher's day at our little cabin." The name of the teacher, Booker's foster brother recalled, was William Davis. Tall and thin, he was almost as fair in complexion as a white man.

Booker was heartbroken when his stepfather forbade him to go to the school. Ferguson had discovered the boy's financial value and made him earn every possible cent at the saltworks. The boy's resourceful mother, however, who shared her son's bitter disappointment, helped to work out a scheme whereby he could receive some lessons from William Davis at night. What with his own eagerness and the teacher's concentration upon the one lively pupil, Booker learned at night more than the other boys and girls acquired by day—an early example of his lifelong practice of turning stumbling blocks into steppingstones. Insatiable for learning as he was, however, he continued to press his case for day-school teaching. At last he secured his stepfather's reluctant agreement, provided he went at about four o'clock in the morning to the mines and worked there until nine o'clock.

Again, however, a distressing obstacle harassed the boy. School started at nine o'clock, and as the school building was a long way from the mines he missed the first lesson. The workmen in the mine regulated their time by a clock in the foreman's office. With his young mind obsessed with the desire to get to school in time, Booker seized an occasion to move the hands of the clock half an hour forward. In a few days the mystified foreman provided a lock to the clock. So that again the boy's ambition was balked!

When Booker, as a ten-year-old boy entered the simple schoolroom for the first time he was tingling with joyful excitement. Almost at once, however, perplexity descended upon him. The teacher was asking all the pupils their names. Every boy except himself had two names. He had never been called anything save Booker. "By the time the occasion came for the enrolling of my name, an idea occurred to me which I thought would make me equal to the situation," he wrote later. "And so, when the teacher asked me what my full name



was, I calmly told him 'Booker Washington' as if I had been called by that name all my life."

Not until much later did he discover that his mother had given him the name of Booker Taliaferro soon after his birth. Naturally the long second name lapsed through disuse. After discovering what his mother had named him he always used the full name of Booker Taliaferro Washington. It is interesting that his elder brother, John, and his younger adopted brother, James, as well as his sister, Amanda, all accepted the name "Washington" which Booker had conferred upon himself.

One other boyish trouble arose from the fact that all the other boys had hats to wear on going to school. Booker had none. His mother, refusing to go into debt by buying a hat she could not afford, sewed together two pieces of cloth to make the first covering that ever went on the boy's head. His schoolmates made fun of his strange cap; but his mother's lesson on not going into debt in order to "show off" remained with him always.

Two pear trees stood in the back yard of the little cabin and a high railroad embankment limited the view from the front. Booker had a favorite playground under a beautiful old water-oak hugged by a grape-vine. His neighbors told long after how he used to sit after his work under that oak to rest and brood. His teacher, William Davis, as an old man of ninety-four years, told Miss Addie Streator Wright, who was in Malden in 1929, that he was sure that in the lessons he gave to the boy was the seed of the miracle that Washington worked later among the red clay hills of Alabama. He also averred that he thrashed Booker for going fishing when he should have been at school. Another man, seventy years of age when interviewed by Miss Wright, confessed to a stand-up fight as a boy at school with Booker, who made his nose

bleed. One characteristic boyish outbreak was recalled by an old lady who, as a school-time sweetheart, received her first gift from Booker—a half-ripe pear!

John, Booker's elder brother, by his energy and industrious executive skill helped his brother and the others during their life at Malden, as he had helped Booker in the slave days with the flaxen shirts. "Brother John," James Washington told the author, "built a kitchen at the back of the cabin with no tool but a hatchet. The kitchen was made of straight up and down planks. John also supplied the family with its first bedsteads—plain oblong frames on wooden posts, with cord stretched across the frame."

Not far from Malden coal mines in the mountainside were worked in order to feed the salt furnaces. Booker, between the ages of ten and twelve, was transferred to these coal mines, with his still younger foster brother, James, who described their work to the author. For part of the time the boys acted as "trappers." That is, they opened and closed doors or "traps" to the mine shafts which regulated the supply of air in the mines. The shafts, which ran as far as a mile into the Blue Ridge chain, were not sunk vertically, but ran straight into the side of the mountains. Mules drew empty trucks into the mine and tugged them out full of coal. A miner stood on the bumper in front of each truck, which was laden with a ton to a ton and a half of coal. At the exit, where the boys opened the doors with a cord, the mule would get out of the way while the coal was tipped from the truck into a hopper and so down an incline.

Each boy, James B. Washington recalled, wore a cap with a tin-container groove in the front of it. A little lamp, shaped like a small teapot and filled with a non-explosive illuminant called lard-oil, was fitted into the groove. The wick of cotton came up through the spout, giving a feeble flickering light, as it

jutted out over the forehead in front of the cap. For some part of the time Booker had to penetrate into the farthest shafts of this mine. He never forgot the horror of the darkness and of being repeatedly lost in the labyrinthine maze. When his light went out he had to grope with his hands until at last some other miner came along with a lamp.

As Booker grew in strength his work in the mine became heavier. The miners used explosive cartridges and a pick in digging coal, and the conditions were charged with peril from premature explosion of the powder and sudden falls of slate or coal. Each miner had several picks, which were constantly sharpened and repaired by a skilled blacksmith attached to the mine.

In the darkness of the mine, swinging his pick, Booker, as an imaginative adolescent, was tormented by visions of what heights he could achieve if he were white. He rebelled at being robbed of education by the obstacle of his racial origin. Brooding over his ambitions one day he caught some stray sentences from the conversation of two adult miners. They seemed to be speaking of a new college for colored youth in Virginia. This staggered him; for he had never dreamed of the existence of any school for Negroes above the scale of the tiny equipment at Malden. Moving silently in the darkness close to the men he overheard one say that students who had good brains could work for their board and learn to be skilled artisans. He had, at the outset, no notion as to the place of the school, the distance from Malden, or the way to get to it. Yet a firm determination to reach that college henceforward filled Booker's whole being by day and night.

Booker heard a little later that the wife of the owner of the saltworks and coal mine, General Lewis Ruffner, needed a boy to keep the house tidy, tend the garden, run errands, feed the chickens, repair fences, and be a general factotum. Warnings

against her as an exacting "Yankee" woman from Vermont, a strict virago with a biting tongue who could never keep a boy for as long as a month, did not deter Booker, who desired any step that would take him out of the mine. His mother interviewed Mrs. Viola Ruffner on his behalf. He entered her service at five dollars a month, and his knees shook when he met her. To the end of his days he never tired of extolling her virtues and speaking of the value of her discipline, which made him hate everything slovenly or slipshod. Scraps of scattered paper, a broken paling, a grease-spot aroused his ire as a symbol of inner lack of disciplined self-respect. This he owed to Mrs. Ruffner; and she, having at last found a youth whom she could trust, reposed in him the most absolute confidence and gave him the opportunity of extending his schooling and beginning to form a library. He got hold of a grocer's box, put shelves in it, stood it on end, and one by one proudly ensconced book after book in his "library," as he named it.

Torture was inflicted on the spirit of the boy by the very books that opened up new vistas of knowledge. As he opened his first geography book at school he was startled and aghast to see, side by side with a picture of George Washington, one of a naked African, a ring in his nose and a dagger in his hand. School books told him of his ancestors as "a people who roamed naked through the forest like wild beasts, a people without houses or laws, without chastity or morality, with no family life or fixed habits of industry." Yet he still held fast, as he said, to the notion that "A race which could produce as good and gentle and loving a woman as my mother must have some good in it that the geographers had failed to discover."<sup>4</sup>

On top of this he listened to orations "in which the whole

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<sup>4</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. I, pp. 8-11.

Negro race was denounced in a reckless and wholesale manner," and "read newspapers and books in which the Negro race has been described as the lowest and most hopeless of God's creation." He confessed that, in his youth, he was driven almost to despair by hard and bitter, and frequently unjust, statements about his race. "At first," he said, "they sometimes made me feel as if I wanted to go away to some distant part of the earth and bury myself where I might be a stranger to all my people, or at least where the thing that we call race prejudice did not exist in the way it does in the Southern States. Sometimes I thought of doing something desperate which would compel the world . . . to recognize what seemed to me the wrongs of my race. But afterward, and on second thought, the effect was to drive me closer to my own people . . . to feel toward them as I did toward my own dear mother who had brought me into the world when she and they were slaves." Out of this purgatory of adolescent suffering came the determination, as he put it, "to spend my life in helping and strengthening the people of my race, in order to prove to the world that . . . it should learn to respect them in the future, both for what they were and what they should be able to do."<sup>5</sup>

One day when Booker Washington was a man a friend asked him what games he played as a boy. After reflection he replied that actually throughout his boyhood he never had any playtime and had learned no games. Through the year or more in Mrs. Ruffner's service the ambition to go to the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, of which he heard the men in the mine talking, burned within him. At last, in the autumn of 1872, at the age of sixteen, he decided to burn his boats and make his way there. He confided his determination to his

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<sup>5</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. I, p. 12.

mother, who was deeply troubled at this dive into the unknown without any resources. She consented, however, to his going. His stepfather had taken all his earnings. He had no suitable clothes in which to present himself at the Institute or for travel. His brother, John, however, had a few dollars which, with characteristic selflessness, he handed over to Booker, whose heart was warmed also by various tiny gifts from some of the older colored folk who had lived through slavery and felt a thrill at the unheard-of venture of a Negro going to college. To leave his beloved mother, whose health was failing, cost Booker a severe wrench.

Carrying a little cheap case with his meager clothing in it, the boy set out. Most of the journey had to be made in horse-drawn stagecoaches. The distance was fully five hundred miles. One cold night among the mountains of Virginia the youth received a sharp shock at the severity of racial discrimination under freedom. The coach stopped at a wooden house that bore the title "hotel." Asking the landlord for shelter, he was at once repulsed as a "nigger," and refused either a roof or food. He walked about on that mountainside all night in order to keep warm.

His money soon gave out. He begged rides in wagons. He walked for long distances. At last he reached Richmond, capital of Virginia, the first considerable city that he had ever entered. Tortured by increasing hunger, worn out with walking the streets until the small hours of the morning through inability to get shelter, he could not drag his feet another yard. Seeing that the board pavement by the side of the street was on wooden piles, he waited until the street was empty and then slid underneath with his little case, on which he put his head as a rough pillow. There the penniless boy slept for some hours.

Less fatigued but ravenously hungry and without a cent

in his pocket, he saw at the dock a ship unloading pig iron. He approached the captain, asking to be allowed to help with the unloading in order to get money for food. He went to and fro with the loads of iron on his back until he had earned enough to pay for a breakfast, which, as he recalled it a third of a century later, appeared to him to have been the best that he had ever eaten. The captain told him that he could go on with the work if he wished. He did so, earning enough to carry him by rail and stagecoach to Hampton. He economized by continuing to sleep under the sidewalk. Years later, when thousands of the colored folk of Richmond flocked to a reception to do him honor, he confessed that his mind was more upon that sheltering board pavement than upon the honor they were paying him.

At last, with just fifty cents left in his pocket, the excited youth gazed in admiration at Hampton Institute, the three-story brick school building that was to him the "Promised Land." A chilly reception damped his spirits. He had all the appearance of a tramp. For weeks he had had no change of clothing. He had slept night after night on the ground and had carried pig iron on his shoulder day after day. With his worn grubby shoes and no chance of a bath or of tidying himself, as well as being seriously underfed, Booker looked like a "down and out." The head teacher, an earnest devoted worker from one of the northern states, would not admit him then; but she did not definitely reject him. Hours passed. His heart fell as he saw numerous other students admitted while he hung about, hoping against hope for an opportunity to show his mettle.

Looking up and seeing him still there, the head teacher ejaculated:

"The adjoining recitation room needs sweeping. Take that broom and sweep it."

Booker leaped at the chance. All that the severe discipline of Mrs. Ruffner had taught him came to his aid. He swept that room three times, including the cupboards. He moved every piece of furniture. He got hold of a duster and went four times over every inch of wood in the room. Then he reported. The head teacher, with her Yankee zest for chasing dirt, examined every corner. Finally she took her handkerchief from her pocket and rubbed it on the table and benches. It remained spotless.

He was in the seventh heaven when she turned to him after this strange entrance examination and said,

"I guess you will do to enter this institution."

As with Mrs. Ruffner, so with this head teacher, Miss Mary F. Mackie, the very severity of the discipline led to great kindness to anyone who was able to meet its challenge. She gave Booker unlimited trust when she found that she could rely upon him. She made him janitor of the building, which almost covered the cost of his board. With some beginnings of confidence he launched himself on his career as a student.



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## STUDENT AND APPRENTICE-TEACHER

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When Booker Washington became a student and janitor-on-trial at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in the autumn of 1872, that venture in the education of the freed Negro was still in the embryo stages of its development. Already, however, it held a distinctive place in the illustrious line of educational institutions then being created by the American Missionary Association. That forceful organization had been founded in Boston in 1843 by a group of out-and-out fighters against slavery. At the outset the supporters were mainly New England Congregationalists.

This Association during its early years founded for the education of the Negroes, in addition to Hampton Institute, Fisk University in Tennessee, Atlanta University and Tullahoma College in Georgia, Talladega College in Alabama, Tougaloo College in Mississippi, and Straight University in Louisiana. The Negro owes an incalculable debt to such institutions as these, and particularly to the men and women who gave generously to their support.

The most potent and sacrificial service, however, was furnished by the white teachers themselves, who, for the most part, were from the North. Miss Mary F. Mackie, who tested and then accepted and trained Booker Washington, and Miss Nathalie Lord of Portland, Maine, who laid the foundations of his power as a public speaker and taught him how to use the Bible as well as to love it, are only two members of an heroic group of pioneers. In those early days these New England

leaders often faced derision and positive hostility for their devotion to the education of the Negro. The foundation work of creating for the first time in history an intelligent leadership for the Negro race in America was carried through by their vision and determination.

The personality of Samuel Chapman Armstrong towers above most of his fellows in this body of adventurous educators. His mind and will shaped Hampton Institute for the specialized creative task that it has carried through ever since. Born among Pacific Island primitive people on Hawaii in 1839, the son of a missionary who believed in educating the islanders in handicrafts, Armstrong became a student at Williams College. There he came under the quickening spiritual and humane influence of Mark Hopkins, whose name has been immortalized in President Garfield's aphorism, spoken at a Williams College alumni meeting: "Give me a log hut, with only a simple bench, Mark Hopkins on one end and I on the other, and you may have all the buildings, apparatus and libraries without him."<sup>1</sup> Armstrong threw himself as a soldier into the Civil War on the Union side, and rose to be brevet brigadier general in command of freed Negro troops. He was appointed in 1867 as Principal of Hampton School, then still in its earliest stages of growth. Calling upon his boyhood memories of Hawaii, Armstrong daringly launched it in 1868 as a co-educational institute for training Negro young men and women to earn their own living as handicraftsmen, agriculturists, and homemakers. His adventurous vision looked still farther ahead to the preparation of an elite of Negro leaders who would have high character and sufficient mastery of these subjects to train others of their own race. He thus set out to

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<sup>1</sup> New York, December 28, 1871. Mark Hopkins was president of Williams College until 1872, and of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions until 1881.

create the creators of a skilled Negro population of integrity who would help to shape the citizenry of an harmonious interracial America.

Many of the new educational institutions were then concentrating upon the education of Negroes predominantly for urban careers, in business or the professions. Hampton became conspicuously successful in equipping its graduates as skilled handworkers in the crafts that are linked with housebuilding and the making and repairing of agricultural equipment, such as ironwork, carpentry, and cabinetmaking; as well as in training first-class farmers in the raising of animals and in agriculture. On the opening day when Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute was launched on its voyage, chartered by a special Act of the General Assembly of Virginia, General Armstrong defined its goal. Each phrase of his central affirmation has significance for an understanding of the work of Booker Washington who, to the end of his life, looked to Armstrong as his ideal both in character and lifework. The aim was, he said, "to train selected youth who shall go out and teach and lead their people, first by example, by getting land and homes; to give them not a dollar that they can earn for themselves; to teach respect for labor; to replace stupid drudgery with skilled hands; and to these ends to build up an industrial system for the sake of character."

That Booker Washington's steps led him in 1872 to Hampton, where he instantly fell under the spell of Armstrong's inspiring personality, was a determining factor in shaping his whole contribution to the future of his race in the American scene. The Institute had only been running for four years. Armstrong was engaging the full measure of his virile powers in organizing its expansion, raising the funds needed for its development, recruiting teachers, perfecting their training for their tasks, and assembling promising students.

In one of his rare flights into the superlative, Booker Washington, a third of a century later, when speaking of his first meeting with Samuel Armstrong, described him as "the noblest, rarest human being that it has ever been my privilege to meet. It has been my fortune," he went on, "to meet personally many great characters, both in Europe and America, but I do not hesitate to say that I never met any man who, in my estimation, was the equal of General Armstrong. It was my privilege to know the General personally from the time I entered Hampton till he died, and the more I saw of him the greater he grew in my estimation." He concluded, in words that curiously echo those of Garfield on Hopkins, "One might have removed from Hampton all the buildings, classrooms, teachers and industries, and given the men and women there the opportunity of coming into daily contact with General Armstrong, and that alone would have been a liberal education."

On his arrival at Hampton, Booker Washington was faced at once with a baffling problem. Fifty cents was all he had in the world. The charge for his board was ten dollars a month, of which only a part was worked out by his labor as janitor. The cost of tuition was seventy dollars a year, which was wholly beyond his means. His unselfish brother, John, sent him an occasional dollar or so out of his tiny earnings.<sup>2</sup> But, unless some further help came, Booker could see that he would be forced to leave the Institute. His work as janitor, however, proved to be so efficient that it was allowed to cover the entire cost of his board. Later on, S. Griffith Morgan of New Bedford, Massachusetts, was interested in him through General Armstrong's good offices and became a valuable benefactor

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<sup>2</sup> Later on, after graduation, Booker was able to finance John's education at Hampton Institute, and later he and John combined to send their adopted brother, James, to Hampton.

by meeting the entire cost of Booker's tuition during the years at Hampton. Nevertheless, Booker still owed the institution sixteen dollars at the end of his first year of work there.

Other enigmas which perplexed him throw further light on the primitive conditions from which he and his race were then emerging in the southern states. In the dormitory where he slept were seven other boys. Booker had never slept in a made bed. The sheets puzzled him. He slept under both of them the first night; on top of both the second night; on the third night, by watching the other students, he mastered the secret of getting between them. General Armstrong daily inspected the students for cleanliness and tidiness. Booker had no change of clothing. How was he to be janitor and agriculturist and classroom student and nevertheless look spotless at inspection time? When the teachers realized his plight and came to recognize his enthusiasm, they gave him access to some of the secondhand clothing sent down from the North by friends of the institution.

His clothing problem was solved for the time being. Still, however, that debt of honor, the sixteen dollars, hung round his neck. He worked during the summer vacation in a restaurant at Fortress Monroe near Hampton, but received little beyond his board. He could save next to nothing. As the second year approached with his debt still unpaid, he found a ten-dollar bill under a table in the restaurant. Overjoyed at this unlooked-for help, he nevertheless felt it to be right to show it to the proprietor, who, to his deep chagrin, pocketed it as having been found on his property.

Fearing that he might be rejected as an unsatisfactory student, he braced himself to tell the Hampton Institute treasurer, General Marshall, of his financial plight. The General said that he would trust him to pay when he was able, and reinstated him for a second year as janitor. The seventeen-year-

old boy pursued his studies, which ranged from learning the value of the best breeds of hens, hogs and cattle—an enthusiasm that was to govern his educational policy and his own personal enjoyment as a hobby to the end—to a passion for the work of the debating society.

He always declared that the most valuable acquisition in his second year at Hampton was the love of reading the Bible. This he caught from the example and advice of Miss Lord, the teacher who, next to General Armstrong, would seem to have had the most decisive and enduring influence upon him. No day passed in his life from that time forward on which he failed to spend some time reading the King James Version of the English Bible. Its influence upon his command of the English language, over and above its deeper significance in the development of character and control of motive, is incalculable.

Miss Lord also is given credit by him for invaluable guidance with regard to voice production, breathing, articulation, and elocution. "Whatever ability I may have as a public speaker," he said, "I owe in a measure to Miss Lord." She gave him this help when she discovered his zest for oratory. Not content with taking part in every single meeting of the Hampton debating society on Saturday evening, he even went on to create a little group of twenty of the more eager students who engaged in zealous discussion during the twenty-minute interval between the end of supper and the beginning of evening studies.

This intense concentration by Booker upon public speech while still in his later teens calls for attention. One of the stimuli that had quickened his first desire to learn to read came from the unique fame at that time of the flaming and potent Negro orator, Frederick Douglass. Every Negro slave in the 1860's had known that even President Lincoln himself con-

sulted Douglass in numerous interviews. His dramatic life lent itself to inspiring legends that passed from lip to lip. He was the slave son of a white father and a Negro mother, as Booker was. No one knew the date of his birth (it was about 1817); but his oratory had spread harrowing stories of his sufferings as a youth under the slavemaster's lash and his thrilling escape by the "underground" to free soil. His dedication before, during and after the Civil War, to the task of raising the level of his race, his tireless round of speeches in the North and in Great Britain, his unflinching courage under a hail of stones, and his dignity in face of the slanderous epithets of his political enemies, made him, in Booker Washington's youth, the outstanding hero of his race. During the years when Booker was at Hampton, Douglass held political office under Republican Presidents, and was also to hold office in the 1880's under a Democrat, Grover Cleveland. All of these Presidents called him into frequent consultation.

Any Negro youth eager to exercise leadership in the elevation of his race inevitably at that time was influenced by Douglass' career, which was driven forward by oratory and ran on political lines.<sup>3</sup> Booker Washington had not yet decided whether to go into politics or not. The quality of his speech, as well as of his writing, was deeply affected by the habit of daily Bible reading, and Shakespeare's plays also fascinated him; he read them constantly. In Washington's oratory the direct simplicity and imagery, combined with dignity, and the emotional force that never rose to shrill fury (as it did in Douglass' speeches) were largely due to his saturation in the prose and poetry of those two fountainheads of the English language.

As his second year at Hampton drew towards its close

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<sup>3</sup> It is of interest that the parents of the third head of Tuskegee Institute chose as his "given" names "Frederick Douglass" (Patterson).

Booker was rejoiced to receive a gift of money from his mother and his brother John. This, with a modicum from a friendly teacher, covered the cost of his travel home to Malden in West Virginia for the vacation. He was startled and delighted at the jubilation of all the Negro population at his return after two years' absence. Each family invited him to a meal and hung on his lips as he drew on his experiences at Hampton. Owing to a strike of miners at Malden, he was baffled for a month in his effort to get work to earn his way back to Hampton. He walked to a distant place to seek employment, and, being utterly tired out, slept the night in a deserted house. In the morning he was awakened by a hand on his shoulder. His brother John had been searching for him to tell him that their mother had died that night. Booker was heartbroken, for the dream of his life at Hampton was to rise to a position where he could lift his mother from penury and drudgery.

The home at Malden fell into disorder. His young sister, Amanda, had not the strength or skill to run it properly. The shiftless stepfather, then on strike, could not afford help. Mrs. Ruffner helped Booker by giving him work. He had just assembled sufficient money to cover his travel back to Hampton, although still sorely in need of clothing, when, to his joy, a letter came from Miss Mary Mackie asking him to come two weeks before the new term opened, in order to help her to prepare the rooms for the opening of his third year. How deep an impression he received from working side by side with a cultured woman from one of the aristocratic New England families, making beds, cleaning rooms and windows together, is seen in his indignation during later years at any education for the Negro that failed to instill by word and deed "the dignity of labor."

The humiliating contrast between the messiness and hap-



hazard squalor of the cabin at Malden and the trim, self-respecting disciplined life at Hampton burned in upon his consciousness. Folk who, in later years, sneered at his almost vehement insistence upon "toothbrush drill," the well-made bed, the attractively-laid meal table, and gates properly hung on their hinges, were met by his inflexible stand. These elements in well-ordered and gracious living are, he constantly maintained, stones in the foundations of civilization.

The work during his last year at Hampton was intense. It combined the responsibilities of janitor, the "grind" of study in the classroom and over his books, the toil in the fields and pig-sties, and perpetual practice in public speech. His ambition to be chosen as a Commencement speaker was achieved. A photograph of him taken at that time shows a brown face with wide high brow under thick black hair, eager penetrating eyes, a broad decisive nose, and a mouth whose full lips are firmly compressed over a chin that expresses determination. A book is characteristically held firmly in his left hand.

When he graduated he had not enough money to carry him home. To earn some he borrowed his fare from other students, with whom he traveled to Connecticut to work as a waiter in a summer resort hotel. His complete ignorance of how to wait on table led to his being reduced to the grade of dish-carrier. Stung by his failure, he made up his mind to master the skills of a waiter. He succeeded, and was soon restored to the more eminent position. This apparently trivial incident is eloquent of a personal trait that was to play a vital part in his whole career: he was aroused to a fighting persistence when he failed at a first attempt to achieve a difficult enterprise. He was always "baffled to fight better."

Returning at the end of the season to Malden, he was chosen to teach the Negro school there. With zest he buckled to the task, soon adding to it a night school for adult illiterates.

From eight in the morning until ten at night he taught. True to his principles, imbibed at Hampton, he laid as vigorous an emphasis on the bath, the comb, the hairbrush, and the toothbrush as on the book and the writing-slate. This had some effect upon his own home cabin. Amanda was growing in capacity to handle things. The record of her later life shows that her brother's example and his—at the time probably tiresome—precepts led her to adopt his standards. The stepfather lapsed into the background, incorrigibly listless and lacking in discipline and initiative.

Not content with all this teaching work at Malden, Booker characteristically expanded his enterprise to the limit of available time and energy. Having recruited several students, including his brother John, to go to Hampton, he prepared them for their entrance examinations by giving private lessons without payment. He opened a little reading room; he started and ran a debating society; he walked out three miles every Sunday morning to teach Sunday school for colored boys and girls in a neighboring town and back to Malden to teach another Sunday school in the afternoons.

One day a sudden gleam of fresh understanding about education broke in on young Booker as he was teaching in the crude school in Malden. In a manuscript page found by the author in his files he tells the story of this happening which, simple though it was, became a guiding light in his subsequent creative educational enterprises. After describing how the school was near a marshy yet beautiful place, he says:

The June day was rather close and stuffy and hot, so much so that when the usual recess or "play" time came I was as anxious to get out in the air as the children were—so much so that I prolonged the "playtime" to more than twice its usual length. The hour previous to playtime had been taken by me in trying to get a class of children interested in what proved to be a dull, dry,

stupid geography lesson. I had been asking the most stupid and dull abstract questions concerning lakes, capes, peninsulas, islands, etc., and of course the answers of the children were equally stupid and dull. To my delight, as soon as the children were dismissed from the school for the "playtime," they all, as by instinct, scampered off into the marshes and began to roll up their pants and in a few seconds were wading through the cool water and jumping through the cool grass and enjoying themselves in a way that presented a contrast to my dull geography lesson. I soon got the fever of the children and in a few minutes I was following them at a rapid rate and entering into the full enjoyment of the change from deadness to life.

We had not been out of the school house and away from the old geography lesson long before the boy who was most dull in the recitation became the leader of the party and began to point out along the stream dozens of islands, capes, peninsulas, lakes, and what not. Every one of the children began at once to pick out the natural divisions of land and water in the same way, and there was real joy and zest in the work. For the first time the real difference between study about things through the medium of books and studying things themselves without the medium of books dawned upon me. The lesson that I learned then has remained with me in all of my educational work.

The fact that this was a fresh illumination to him suggests some inadequacy in the Hampton teaching. Hampton did harness its students to practical projects as part of their work. We do not find, however, any evidence that the idea of teaching every subject, like mathematics, geography, geometry, and so on in terms of "project" or of "enterprise" had yet been developed. Indeed, Booker Washington's application of this principle in his own work was, as we shall see on the testimony of educational experts, well ahead of the advanced university work of his time.

At some undetermined time during this period at home, Booker fell in love with a Miss Fannie N. Smith of Malden who had been, their daughter Portia later said, "a childhood

sweetheart." She, too, became a graduate of Hampton Institute.

An ugly menacing break in those two years at home came through a fierce battle of a gang of the Ku Klux Klan against the colored people at Malden. The Klan had passed the climax of its career by 1876; but many night raids were perpetrated by lawless bands of young "ghouls," as the white-robed masked patrolers were called. One night in Malden a Ku Klux Klan band attacked the colored people. A free fight developed, with about a hundred people engaged on each side. General Lewis Ruffner intervened in defense of the colored people. The wild "ghouls" knocked down the old Civil War veteran and wounded him so seriously that he never fully recovered. "It seemed to me," Booker wrote later in *Up from Slavery*, "as I watched this struggle between members of the two races, that there was no hope for our people in this country."

Having arrived at an age when he was bound to make a choice of a lifework, he was faced with the alternative careers of politics or teaching. He saw realistically the immense and complex range of obstacles hindering the advance of his people. He had decisively dedicated himself to work for their progress. The question still unanswered was: What function best suits my capacity and is calculated to make the most creative contribution?

To clarify his mind and gain some insight into the more literary side of education, he left Malden at the end of two years' work there as teacher, and went up to Washington in 1878 for eight months' study at the Wayland Seminary. This institution for Negro students gave no industrial training. Hardly any of its students earned their way through the course, their expenses being paid for them. He formed the impression that they were less self-reliant and more concerned with outward show than the students at Hampton, that they

learned Greek and Latin, but nothing of the conditions that would confront them on going out into the world. Alongside sturdy Negro citizens, some in business and others in minor government positions, were large numbers whose outlook was enfeebled by dependence upon government agencies. Negro girls, whose mothers were engaged in laundry work, went to school for six to eight years of book-learning, and left it, having acquired expensive tastes in clothes but no skill that would equip them to earn a livelihood. Many of them, as he put it, "went to the bad." This eight months in Washington convinced him that mental training is of the highest value for his race in giving "strength and culture to the mind," but that it should go alongside a thorough training to develop skills that would "plant them upon the soil, upon the solid and never deceptive foundation of Mother Nature, where all races and nations that have ever succeeded have gotten their start—a start that at first may be slow and toilsome, but one that nevertheless is real."<sup>4</sup>

The choice between politics and education as a career was still undecided when his life was interrupted by a strange interlude. The state of West Virginia had its capital in the unsuitable town of Wheeling. Everyone in the state was agreed that a more central place should be chosen as the seat of its legislature, but vehement debate was rife as to which other town was the most suitable. The West Virginia legislature decided to make the choice the subject of a referendum, and named three towns from among which the capital must be selected. Booker Washington's surprise was intense when a committee of white people in Charleston invited him, on his return from his eight months in Washington, to travel throughout the state for three months making speeches in favor of

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<sup>4</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, Chapter V.

Charleston. He evidently had not realized that his capacity as a convincing, persuasive speaker was so widely known. In those early days, however, a Negro graduate was a comparative rarity, and his training, as well as his constant work as a teacher, had soon made him a marked man. He accepted the invitation and made numerous speeches in all parts of West Virginia. At the subsequent referendum Charleston won the prized place as capital of the state. This, naturally, widened and strengthened his prestige as a speaker.

For this reason many of his own people urged him to head for a political career. The example of Frederick Douglass and other less eminent Negro politicians led many aspiring colored youths to enter that arena. A considerable number of the abler and more venturesome colored politicians became senators or held other state or Federal offices, such as Registrar of the United States Treasury. In *The Story of the Negro* Booker Washington, in telling the life story of a number of these men who flourished when he himself was at Malden as a working boy, describes them as "shrewd, resolute, resourceful, and even brilliant men, who became, during the brief period of storm and stress, the political leaders of the newly-enfranchised race."<sup>5</sup> Booker was held back from entering politics by an almost intuitive sense of the insecurity of that handful of Negroes in a political hurly-burly in which the enormous preponderance of combatants were white men.

Even as a boy [he wrote later] I can remember that all through the days of Reconstruction I had a feeling that there was something in the situation into which the course of events had pushed the Negro people that was unstable and could not last. It did not seem possible that a people who yesterday were slaves could be transformed within a few days into citizens capable of making laws for the government of the State or the government of the Nation. . . . It was, to a very large extent, a white man's quarrel,

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<sup>5</sup> vol. II, pp. 22 *et seq.*

and the Negro was the tennis ball which was batted backward and forward by the opposing parties.<sup>6</sup>

In any case he felt, as he said in his autobiography, that any advancement that he might have achieved "would be a rather selfish kind of success—individual success at the cost of failing to do my duty in assisting in laying a foundation for the masses."

His ability in public speech now brought him another invitation that both rejoiced and challenged him. General Armstrong wrote inviting him to come to the Commencement at Hampton Institute in May 1879 to deliver the "postgraduate" address. He labored long in drafting and perfecting a speech on "The Force that Wins." Arriving at Hampton seven years after his first entry as a ragged unkempt suppliant, he reveled in the friendly and lively reception that the teachers and students gave to him, and in the enthusiastic applause that followed his oration.

Hardly had he returned to Malden when a fresh cause for astonishment came in another letter from General Armstrong, this time inviting him to return to Hampton to teach and also to pursue supplementary study. The new assignment was a taxing one, as it involved the success or failure of a pioneer experiment undertaken by the General. The educability of the American Indian had never so far been tested adequately. Most people at that time held that he lay beyond the reach of education. Indomitably adventurous, General Armstrong set apart a building for an experiment. He secured more than a hundred primitive illiterate Indians from the "Wild West" and invited Booker Washington to be a "house father" to them.

For the proud Indians, many of whose ancestors had pos-

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<sup>6</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. II, p. 28.

sessed Negro slaves and who despised even the white man, to be put under the discipline of a Negro ex-slave tilted the balance against Booker at the outset. Their ignorance of the English language also set an obstacle to easy relationship. They detested exchanging their blankets for coats and trousers, were sullen at having their flowing hair cut, and disliked being asked to forsake their smoking. A few of the Negro students also resented the admission of the Indians as students at Hampton. Booker set himself to conquer all these psychological difficulties. His readiness to coöperate and his radiant good will soon won the esteem and affection of the Indians, as was demonstrated by their pathetic eagerness to help him in return in all his work. He was also able to stimulate the Negro students, not only to forgo their prejudices, but to go out of their way to aid the Indians. Whenever they were asked to do so these Negro youths took the Indians as roommates, helping them to learn English and acquire "civilized" habits.

Not content with this responsibility Booker shouldered the burden of another experiment that Armstrong wished to make at Hampton. A number of young men and women in a poverty so absolute that they could not buy a single book, still less pay for board, desired the education that Hampton could give. Maintaining rigorously his principle of self-help, Armstrong desired to admit a limited number on condition that they would work in the fields or at carpentry or some other handicraft for ten hours a day, and then do two hours of night school. The earnings of the ten hours were to be credited to them in the Institute's accounts, and, after two years, would provide a fund to draw upon for sustaining them as full students until the end of their course. The night school work would also prepare them intellectually for the full course. Washington's infectious enthusiasm so inspired them that he frequently had difficulty in stopping them from study-



ing at bedtime after a twelve-hour working day. He called them "The Plucky Class," and to each student who proved his mettle he gave a printed certificate to say that he was a member of that class "in good and regular standing." Within a few weeks the class doubled its size, and from a dozen ultimately ran up toward four hundred as an established department of the Institute.

He was teaching at Hampton in May 1881 when, at evening chapel, General Armstrong told the students about a letter that had come from a group of white men in Alabama asking him to nominate a white teacher for a normal school which they wished to see started for colored people in the little town of Tuskegee, situated in the Deep South in the heart of the Black Belt, and surrounded by a population predominantly Negro and rural. On the following morning the General asked Booker if he felt that he could initiate such an enterprise if he were invited. He replied that he would be ready to do his best. Accordingly, Armstrong wrote to the Tuskegee committee to say that he had no white teacher available, but that he had a colored graduate who had proved his capacity, and went on to describe Booker Washington. A thrill went through the student body some time later during a Sunday evening service in the Institute Chapel. A messenger came into the building carrying a telegram which he handed to General Armstrong, who read it out to the assembled students: "Booker T. Washington will suit us. Send him at once."

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## BUILDING TUSKEGEE

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A fateful conversation between a white southerner and a Negro ex-slave took place in 1880 in the little town of Tuskegee, capital of Macon County in Alabama, while Booker Washington was still teaching the Indians at Hampton. The white man, Colonel W. F. Foster, who had been a slaveowner and an officer in the Confederate Army, had developed political ambitions. He desired to win a seat in the state legislature of Alabama. The Negro, Lewis Adams, had become a leader among the colored citizens of Tuskegee, largely because, as a slave, he was a skilled craftsman in metals and leather and had learned to read. Colonel Foster was convinced that if, without alienating white support, he could also secure the Negro vote, he would be sure of the coveted seat. In Tuskegee the proportion of white and colored was about equal. In Macon County as a whole three men out of every four were Negro. In Alabama the balance was nearly five to one in favor of the colored population. And at that time the Negroes in Alabama were not restricted in the use of their votes.

Foster, therefore, went to Lewis Adams and asked him what course of action would be most likely to secure the Negro vote. Adams replied without hesitation, out of his own experience, "The Negro wants education and needs teachers. Above all, he needs education in agriculture and in industry. If you will undertake to do all that you can to get the Alabama state legislature to vote money to create such a

school for training Negroes here at Tuskegee, I will work to secure the Negro vote for you."

To that conversation is due the invitation to Booker Washington to take up what became his life-work and the fact that its focal center was at Tuskegee.

The Colonel agreed to do as Adams asked; the bargain was struck; and each man did as he had promised. The ex-slaveholder won his seat largely through the votes of ex-slaves. He piloted through the State Senate, as did Arthur L. Brooks through the House of Representatives, an Act, finally approved on February 12, 1881, which appropriated two thousand dollars annually to provide the salaries for the staff of "a Normal School for colored teachers at Tuskegee." By a strange irony that Act wrote the political death-warrant of the white Colonel. With the rising tide of fear of Negro political dominance in the reaction from the Reconstruction pressure, Foster was branded as a "nigger-lover," and his career came to shipwreck.

Lewis Adams, as a slave boy, had never spent a day in school. He had managed, however, to get someone to teach him privately to read and write. And as a slave he was not an unskilled field hand, but had been trained to handicrafts: he could make shoes and harness, and was also a skilled tin-smith. In the town of Tuskegee he set up a workshop and store for providing these necessities to the white and colored citizens. To this he owed his rise to local leadership of the Negro community. He was therefore convinced that, in the multiplication of educated colored men and women with such technical training, lay the secret of advance for his race in America. He collaborated with George Campbell, a merchant and banker of Tuskegee and a descendant of the oldtime slaveholding aristocracy, in the dispatch of letters to various institutions in search of a principal for the new school. Moses

Campbell, son of this merchant, wrote the letter to General Armstrong which led to the invitation to Booker Washington to go to Tuskegee. The Negro people were at that time only sixteen years out of slavery.

An old white citizen of Tuskegee told the author that, before this local group in Tuskegee sought guidance from General Armstrong in the choice of a teacher-principal for their school, they had already invited a white man from one of the other institutions to which they had written. He came to Tuskegee, found that the school was not yet in existence, and that not only had no building been chosen, no land secured, no apparatus arranged for and no students recruited, but that no money had been voted for any of those purposes. The state grant was to be used, he was told, solely for salaries. Not unnaturally he had turned his back upon the whole project as hopeless.

Young Booker Washington's disappointment on arriving at Tuskegee in 1881 (he was only twenty-five years old), was equally profound. He showed at once, however, that curious quality of elation in combat against apparently unconquerable enemies that was a hallmark of his character. Borrowing a mule and a little crude wagon, he started out on a strange Odyssey. He took to the dust roads across the country to let the poverty-stricken lethargic Negroes in their tumble-down cabins know what was planned for them, and to try to recruit the raw material of a new leadership for their race. From the outset, his ambition was to lift a people, not simply to start a school. To grasp that fact is crucial to our understanding of the man and all his work.

Coming upon a colored farmer wielding his hoe in his cotton patch, he would engage him in talk, then draw his wife into the conversation and ask them what difficulties they faced and what were their hopes, if any, for their boys

and girls. Night after night in different wooden cabins he slept on the floor of the one room in which, in most cases, the whole family was housed. If any primitive provision for washing existed, it was out of doors. When he woke in the morning in one of the cabins he saw again the scenes of his own boyhood. Here was the family with no table, no knives, forks, spoons, or plates; the father seized a piece of fried pork from the pan and a hunk of bread, put the two together and munched the food on his way to the field; the boys and girls similarly ate their portions running about the yard; instead of going to school the young folk took hoes and trudged off barefoot to the cotton field, the mother leading the way with her baby in her arms, attending to it as it lay at one end of the furrows while she worked. This was his own life as a boy all over again. He realized that he himself might still have been floundering in a similar hand-to-mouth existence had he not found entrance into Hampton. But these people had caught no glimpse of such an advancement toward the good life. How, he asked himself, could he stimulate it? Out of his own deep sympathy with those who were still caught in a way of life from which he himself had been freed, he began at once to find the answer, as the young white teacher who had turned his back upon the enterprise would almost certainly have failed to do. It became ever clearer to Booker Washington that nothing short of changing the whole pattern of their life would suffice to lift his people.

As the colored cultivator's sole idea of agriculture was to grow cotton right up to his cabin door in an effort to pay his rent to the white landowner, he often had to go into debt to buy in the town the pork and grain which, Booker insisted, he could and should have raised on the excellent soil at his door. This depressing picture of economic servitude in perpetual shackles of debt burned into the young educator's brain. The

three economic motives that were to control his work at Tuskegee and his advocacy across the South began to take shape. First, the Negro must own his own land. Second, he must with his own hands build on that land his own decent dwelling. Third, to these ends he must know how to cultivate successfully multiple subsistence food crops and to rear animals, so that he could not only feed his family off the land instead of by expenditure in the market town, but could sell his own products there, to acquire the money with which to buy the land and to build the house. "Book-learning" was essential for advance. But as a veneer over social crudity and economic serfdom it could by itself only lead to tragic frustration and bitterness.

Inquiring about local schools among those primitive groups of colored field hands and farmers, he found here and there an undertrained teacher, who was sometimes the still more inadequately equipped preacher, holding intermittent school sessions in a tumbledown wooden church or someone's log cabin. Such a school was attended by a minority of the children, who only came when they could be spared from the field work. At that time, of the 500,000 Negroes in Alabama, the average daily school attendance is given as 50,184, but the average number of school days of attendance in the year was only 67 days. In the younger teachers he discovered his best recruits for the Institute that he was to create. They had had enough experience of failure to realize their own need of effective education, and were not old enough to have become set in old ways or hopeless about new paths.

From that month's experience of wandering through the cotton fields, Washington drew the lesson that he dinned into the ears of colleagues and audiences and that he never ceased to practise himself: that an incessant aim of education must be to go and see at first hand what is the need of the people

and then go back to the educational institution—school, college or university—and gear its curriculum to meet that need. He formulated his principle that “leadership consists in finding folk where they are and guiding them to where they ought to be.” The distinction between the higher and the lower type of education could not, he held, be drawn on lines that divided the book from the handicraft, but between the education that lifted the whole life to a higher level and the education that failed to achieve that end.

On that journey as he talked to the colored people in their own cabins and fields about education for better agriculture, building and handicrafts, he found himself generally met at the outset either by incomprehension or opposition. The educated white planter was, to these ex-slaves, the man who never worked with his hands at grimy tasks. That abstention from manual labour, therefore, quite naturally became the goal of education in their eyes. A Negro “got education” in order to enter either politics or the ministry. Colored preachers for years assailed his curriculum as “godless.”

Opposition was natural, also, from the more shortsighted white men in the South. “Educate a nigger and he won’t work” was their favorite watchword. They assured Booker that the colored people would drift from the land to the town, feebly imitate the “white-collar” white man, develop into agitators and ne’er-do-wells. Many white landowners wanted to keep the colored population as rural tenants—unskilled growers of cotton, sugar, and tobacco. For this brought money direct to the white planter who exported these crops. They did not want, at that period of development, to see Negro landowners growing varied food crops for themselves and for their own livestock, in addition to the cotton, sugar, or tobacco for sale.

Force was added to these “white” misgivings by the at-

titude of many Negroes. Nothing depressed Washington more than the all-too-familiar sight in the towns of a young Negro with a cheap cigar in his mouth, lounging outside the saloon in the tarnished clothes of the would-be gentleman, and shod in pointed patent leather shoes with gaping holes in them. He never forgot how on that first rural journey he had come upon a young Negro who had been to high school; he was sitting in a one-room cabin in greasy clothes, surrounded by filth, and with the garden a jungle of weeds, working at a French grammar. This was the kind of colored product that inflamed the white man against education for the Negro.

Many of the Negroes, too, urged Washington to go into politics, and their attitude certainly suggested that white fears of educated Negroes developing into agitators were not entirely unfounded. One elderly man, chosen by the political group for that purpose, brought constant political pressure to bear on him. "When we find out which way the white man's gwine to vote," he told the young educator, "den we votes xactly de other way. Den we knows we's right."

Booker's spirits actually rose as he jogged back behind his borrowed mule to Tuskegee after his exploratory journey to face and clear this tangled undergrowth of stubborn resistance. His mind seethed with half-shaped plans for winning the critics, white and black, to the support of the project to which he had set his hand.

At the end of that month of survey he had recruited some thirty students who had agreed to come and enter his still non-existent Institute. Most of his students were the ill-equipped teachers from the cotton-belt cabin schools. Half were men and half women, so that his school was coeducational from the beginning. A crowd of small children wanted to enter, as well as a few adult illiterates. He refused all of these, having decided that, if it was to be a Normal and



Industrial Institute, he would accept no one under sixteen, and that all must at least know how to read.

With no money available he had to get land, buildings, and educational equipment. On reaching Tuskegee again he took counsel with the two supporters who had invited him, George Campbell and Lewis Adams. They persuaded the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, of which Adams was a member, to lend Washington free of cost what he called "a dilapidated shanty." It was in such disrepair that, when rain fell, one of the older students held an umbrella over the teacher while he listened to the recitations of the others.

In this building a start was made on July 4, 1881. On the second morning, as a student named William Gregory, who later headed a department of the Institute, reported forty years later, the young Principal lined up his students and overhauled their clothing, condemning grease spots, collarless shirts, dirty shoes and holes in coats. A swift reformation followed in the realm of cleanliness, although in some cases the students were too poor to buy the collars on which he insisted, and made them of paper. After the clothing inspection Washington asked them, what was the news. They told him of a big fight, but he condemned that as "no news," and told them to find out what was going on in the legislature. This daily quest for real news he insisted upon so long as he taught classes himself.

At this time Booker heard that an abandoned plantation on a plateau about a mile out of Tuskegee was for sale. The mansion of the owners had burned to the ground. The land was bare save for a large cabin that had been used as a slaves' dining room, a hen-house, a wooden kitchen, and a smallish stable. The owner, Mrs. Cora Varner of Tuskegee, asked five hundred dollars for the purchase of the hundred acres of land and these buildings. The price was low, but it loomed

enormous to a penniless teacher. The site was ideal for the purposes fomenting in Washington's imagination. He had, however, no material security to induce anyone to lend him the amount. The owner agreed that she would permit occupation on payment of half the purchase price, with his promise to pay the remainder within a year. After struggling within himself for some days Booker wrote to General Marshall, Treasurer of the Hampton Institute. He told him the whole story and begged him to let him have two hundred and fifty dollars, for which he would make himself personally responsible. To his unspeakable relief Marshall sent the money at once from his own funds. Full of joy and enthusiasm the young teacher immediately took possession of the new property, cleaned away the filth and moved into the buildings. One old Negro whom he invited to come and help him "clean out the hen-house," and who had his own guilty experience of what these words meant, whispered incredulously, "What you mean, boss? You sholy ain't gwine clean out de hen-house in de daytime!"

A light-skinned Negro teacher from the North, Miss Olivia A. Davidson, was secured for Tuskegee Institute in these early months. Born in Ohio, in free territory, she had heard while in her teens, after the Civil War, of the need for teachers for the southern Negroes, and she was trained for that work at Hampton Institute. There her unusual gifts won the support of Mrs. Mary Hemenway of Boston, who financed her through a subsequent two years' training course at the Massachusetts State Normal School at Framingham. Her cherished ambition was realized when she was appointed as a teacher and "lady principal" in this pioneer enterprise at Tuskegee in the Deep South. Her extra training in the theory and practice of teaching brought to the young Principal of the Institute many new ideas and projects. When she arrived,

Booker Washington's thirty students had grown to an enrollment of fifty.

Miss Davidson at once set to work with inventive ingenuity to organize "festivals," suppers, and concerts among the colored people of Tuskegee and to make a personal canvass of white and colored in the community in order to pay off the loan from General Marshall and to raise money for completing the purchase. Within three months enough was raised to repay the loan, and two months later the other half of the purchase money was in hand. No gift touched Booker quite so deeply as that of an old, illiterate ex-slave woman, in rags, but cleanly, who hobbled into the schoolroom one day, leaning on a cane, and said, "I ain't got no money, but I wants you to take dese six eggs. . . an' I wants you to put dese six eggs into de eddication o' dese boys an' gals."

So he moved his school from the Methodist Church shanty in Tuskegee into the four cabins on Mrs. Varner's plantation. In those early months he secured the help of another Hampton graduate, John H. Cardwell, who was an alumnus of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.

Faced by the problem of feeding a growing body of hungry young students, Booker announced to them one morning that they were to beg and borrow every axe and hatchet on which they could lay hands to go out together on a "Chopping Bee." They had no idea what this strange ceremony might be; but discovered, somewhat to the disgust of some of them, that it was nothing more nor less than clearing an area of the plantation from small trees and undergrowth in order to plant varied crops for food. As most of the students had inherited the idea that education was a means of escape from manual labor, they felt rebellious. The fact, however, that the Principal of the Institute was wielding his axe with greater skill and vigor than any of them silenced their ob-

jections, and some conception of "the dignity of labor" began to dawn on their minds. The boys cut down pine trees in order to make the timber into beds, tables and chairs; the girls stripped off the pine needles to sew them into rough cotton covers for mattresses. To the young men he said, "There is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem." To their sisters he said, "It is as important to know how to set a table and keep house as it is to read Latin." Through these enterprises the students caught their first glimpse of Booker Washington's guiding beacon light, that success in education is achieved through the coöperative harnessing of skill and will to meet a human need and to build character.

After he had been at work for a year Booker Washington went back to Malden for his wedding, in 1882, when he was twenty-six years old. He married the friend of his boyhood years, Fannie N. Smith. She realized as soon as she came to the campus that practically no technical training for life, apart from gardening, had been developed for the girl students at Tuskegee. So she initiated in her own home simple courses in what has later come to be called home economics. The Institute thus launched still another project in Washington's characteristic practice of meeting a felt need. A baby girl was born to the Washingtons, named Portia. The mother, however, died within two years of their marriage.

The Principal soon realized that, in order to build residences and class rooms adequate for his Institute, he must have bricks, that the bricks must be made by hand, and that good clay was to be found on the land that he had bought. Getting all the information he could assemble on brickmaking, he worked with his sometimes grumbling students at the heavy dirty work of digging clay and shaping it to the size of bricks. To the students he pointed out that without the bricks they could have no buildings, and that lacking the buildings

they could not have the school that was needed, not only for their own training but for the good of the race.

Greatly daring, he built a little kiln, secured some fuel, and tried to fire some bricks. He failed. He spent from his own pocket the last dollars that he had on more fuel. Again he failed. Baffled, but not daunted, he took his watch, which had been given to him earlier, and pawned it in the nearby town of Montgomery for fifteen dollars in order to buy more fuel. This time he was successful in baking his bricks. The time limit on the pawnticket of the watch expired before he had secured enough money to redeem it, and he never saw the watch again. But he went on to make many millions of bricks for Tuskegee and for the whole community round about.

Oddly enough, the brickmaking had a powerful influence in winning local support for the school. Not only were bricks needed for the erection of one classroom building, residence, workshop, or stable after another for the Institute, but the town of Tuskegee had no kiln and needed bricks. The sceptical attitude towards the Institute was still strong; for, as one of the students who entered the school from a remote cabin the first day has said, "Every minister fought this institution for years. I never thought of its being anything more than a little something that would spring up and die in a few years. Even the best men used to say that it would not last long. 'It will', they said, 'die in about three or four years, and then that appropriation will go back to the state'". But Booker Washington found that the brickmaking made inroads on that scepticism and criticism for three reasons. First, Tuskegee sorely needed bricks, and the newly-trained students had acquired at the Institute the skill to meet that need. Secondly, the purchase of the bricks brought leading business men, white and colored, to the campus, and Washington took

good care that they were shown everything that was being done on the farm and in the workshops. In this way he built up relationships of mutual respect and even friendship. Thirdly, the Tuskegee graduates, with their exceptional skill in this widely-needed handicraft, became in demand all across the southern states, which spread the fame of the Institute and increased the local pride in its leadership.

One significant example of the growth of this attitude startled Washington toward the close of the first year. He had decided that, if they were to go forward, they must have a substantial building that would give the Institute six classrooms, a reading room, a library, a dining hall, a chapel, and, on the top floor, dormitories for the girl students. (The young men were still to be obliged to get lodgings in Tuskegee for a few years.) This project could not be achieved at a cost lower than six thousand dollars. A local white sawmill proprietor came to Booker when he heard of this scheme and offered to bring all the wood needed for the building and place it on the site with no guarantee for payment save the Principal's personal word that the money would be paid when it could be secured. This intensely practical vote of confidence had its effect. The enthusiasm of the colored people grew. Dramatic and bizarre gifts were made; as, for instance, by an old ex-slave who, in a meeting that Washington held in order to raise funds, rose to say that, although he had no money, he had brought one of the two hogs he owned twelve miles in an ox cart as his contribution. The first draft animal on the campus was an old blind white horse presented by a Tuskegee citizen. Many people, unable to subscribe money, volunteered to give longer or shorter periods of work in erecting the building.

One day Booker was passing the home of Mrs. Varner, from whom the ex-slave plantation had been bought, but

who did not know him by sight. She called out to him to chop some wood for her. Pulling off his coat and grasping an axe, he swiftly split a pile of wood and carried it into the kitchen. "That was Professor Washington," said the startled colored maid to her mistress. Mrs. Varner in distress called at his office and apologized. "That is all right, Madam," replied the smiling young Principal. "I like work, and enjoy doing favors for my friends." Mrs. Varner, captivated by his attitude, influenced many rich southern whites to give large sums to Tuskegee.

So swiftly did the number of students grow that in 1884 another dormitory, also for women students, and a dining hall, were erected and opened. This building was named Alabama Hall.

In 1885 Washington married, as his second wife, Olivia A. Davidson, whose work as Lady Principal from 1881 had enriched the institution through her unusually thorough training as an educator, combined with her gifts of initiative and organization, and her close contacts with wealthy northerners who sympathized with the cause of Negro education. She had, in particular, played a major part in the development and discipline of the women students. Evidence is clear that, in addition to this, her literary training and her sensitiveness enabled her, as Mrs. Washington, to help her husband to shape his speeches to a still higher level of persuasive oratory. Two sons were born to them during their four years of married life—Booker Taliaferro and Ernest Davidson. She died in 1889.

On Washington's principle of developing departments of the Institute to meet discovered needs, other workshops were steadily added. One characteristic example is given by a student of those days, talking on the campus years later. He said that he was at work on the brickyard when they put up

Alabama Hall. "The bricks," he said, "were carried to the place of building in wheelbarrows, in our arms, in sacks, and any old way. We worked day and night." Clearly, they needed better means of transport. They had two old mules and an equally old plow horse, but no wagon for brick-carrying or farm work. General Armstrong, who travelled from Hampton to visit Tuskegee in the spring of 1883, was vividly reminded by everything that he saw, as he said afterwards in a letter, of his own beginnings and methods at Hampton. He was amused at the ramshackle buggy in which Washington met him at the depot, with its dilapidated harness and the worn-out nag that was only galvanized into a run by the sudden screech of the locomotive. So wagon building and wheelwright work were needed, and, in due course, Washington added them.

The steady but unsensational progress of development is shown by the dates of the starting of new industries. Brick-making began in 1883 and carpentry in 1884. In that year he also developed a night school like the one he had successfully experimented with at Hampton. Students who could not afford to pay for their board worked during the day at a handicraft to earn their support, and were given two hours' tuition in the evening in the academic side of their education. Board cost eight dollars a month. The cost of tuition, fifty dollars a year, was in the main raised by Booker Washington himself. Printing was initiated in 1885, mattress- and cabinet-making in 1887, wheelwrighting and wagon building in 1888, tinsmithing, harness- and shoe-making in 1889. The opening of that last department gives an example of Washington's initiative in building up the manysided equipment of the Institute. One day in 1889 he walked into Lewis Adams' substantial shop in Tuskegee. After looking round at some apprentices making shoes and harness, at others doing tinsmith



work, and still others working as blacksmiths, he turned to the Negro friend who had been instrumental in bringing him to Tuskegee, and said, "Why not bring all this on to the campus and make it part of the Institute?" As a result, another building was put up and Adams organized the three trades of shoemaker, harnessmaker and tinsmith as part of the regular Tuskegee curriculum. In this way, step by step, valuable additions were made to the skills by which Booker Washington was equipping the Negro for advance on the farm and in the city.

Meanwhile, the Principal had carried through a strategic change in the control of the Institute. While sustaining, for the time being, the legal Alabama State Board of three Tuskegee men—Lewis Adams, George Campbell, and M. B. Swanson—he put the actual management into the hands of an independent governing body of nine trustees, of whom five were representatives from the South and four from the North. He thus linked the growing Institute with a national instead of a purely regional background.

By 1895, to a degree achieved nowhere else in the world at that time, the colored people had a constantly-growing educational institution manned and built entirely by their own efforts, from the small beginning in 1881 with no land, no building, no students, and no teacher save Booker Washington himself. This was not only a source of great pride; it created a new *esprit de corps* and a lively sense of responsibility. Seeds of promise awoke in the startled Negro freshman who began to carve his initials on a doorpost with his jack-knife and found himself sharply checked by an older student with, "Quit that! I built this place. You leave it alone."

The steps by which Booker Washington achieved the remarkable result, and also the development of Tuskegee up to the time of his death, are described in chapter VIII. Mean-

while, it is necessary to turn to an event in his life which was not only startling in itself but which opened doors to hitherto undreamed-of ranges of service and influence.

# 6

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## THE DECISIVE HOUR

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A new development unexpectedly, and, indeed, sensationally transformed Booker Washington's prestige overnight from that of the administrator of a successful regional experiment in progressive education to that of a national leader of his own race and the exponent of a policy that opened new vistas of advance in race relations. The development of Tuskegee had been, up till 1895, the whole theme of his life. Even when he occasionally left the Institute a thousand miles behind on his travels to New England, his goal there was to enlist deeper sympathy and increased financial help for his building enterprises at Tuskegee and for the support of his students. This new development, however, made Tuskegee no longer the circumference of his activity, although it remained to the end the pivotal centre round which his lifework revolved.

The change came about suddenly after quiet preliminary stages. When he was on a speaking tour in the North in 1893 he received an invitation at Boston to go at once down to Atlanta to give a five-minute address to an International Conference of Christian Workers. At first blush the idea seemed preposterous. He must return from Atlanta to Boston to complete his program of meetings there. Atlanta was a thousand miles to the south. To travel two thousand miles in order to speak for five minutes seemed ridiculous. Washington, on careful consideration, thought otherwise. This was the first occasion on which a Negro had been asked to address a widely repre-

sentative audience of white leaders in the South. He accepted the invitation, occupied the long journey to Atlanta with the careful writing and rewriting of his address, arrived half an hour before the meeting, made his five-minute speech with outstanding success, and an hour later was on the way back to Massachusetts, reaching Boston just in time for his next engagement.

Another strange and hitherto unrecorded incident in his speaking career took place about this time. A colored leader, Dr. E. R. Carter, had been selected to make a speech at Atlanta to an assembly of white Baptist leaders. Before the meeting took place Dr. Carter, in a group of Negroes who were criticizing the famous colored orator, Frederick Douglass, for having a white wife, defended Douglass' action. The Atlanta Negro newspaper the next morning carried the headline, "Carter wants white wife." Carter had to sit with a shotgun and surrounded by friends on his front porch to hold off a raid of Negroes and whites against himself. The white organizers of the Baptist Conference said that, in the inflamed state of opinion, they dared not let him speak, and asked his advice. He told them of the young principal who was running the new Negro institute in Alabama. Booker Washington was secured as the speaker for the conference and made a profound impression.

The reputation made by these speeches, both of which dealt with the religious work at Tuskegee and its bearing upon race relations, was enduring. Two years later Atlanta conceived the project of a Cotton Exposition to be organized on such a scale as would capture the attention, not only of the whole American nation, but of the entire world so far as it was interested in cotton and its uses. That plan was one of the first vigorous enterprises to be staged by the South in order to get once more firmly on its own economic feet. The aim

was to dramatize what the South stood for in the world of cotton in all phases from the field to the factory and the home. Again Booker Washington received a telegram from Atlanta. This time he was invited to go as a member of a deputation of white business men and two colored bishops to Washington to present to a Congressional committee reasons for granting governmental financial aid to the projected International Cotton Exposition in 1895. The earlier Atlanta addresses had shown his capacity for convincing speech. Now he was asked to speak alongside white leaders to help in pleading a cause on which great developments depended. What irony, however, that the man who traveled with these white leaders to Washington to win for them the grant which they needed was obliged to travel in segregation from them, simply because on his mother's side he was of Negro descent! He traveled at his own expense.

In a room in Washington the speeches went on for nearly two hours, and the Congressional committee was tired and bored. Last on the long list of speakers, Booker Washington was called on, with only six or seven minutes left, to present the case from the point of view of the Negro masses of cotton cultivators. Within two minutes the committee had been galvanized into lively interest. Referring but once or twice to the notes in his hand, Washington presented his assembled facts and ideas with such convincing force as to contribute decisively toward persuading Congress to vote the two million dollars that were needed. His argument was stated not only from the Negro point of view; he said that if Congress wished to work toward ridding the South of the race problem and toward harmony between the two peoples, it should help the material and intellectual growth of both races. At the Atlanta Exposition both races could show how considerable an advance had been made since the freeing of the slaves. This

could inspire steps for greater progress. The Negro, he said, should not be robbed of the vote by unfair means; but political agitation alone would not save him. Property, industry, skill, economy, intelligence and character must stand behind the ballot. Without these, no race, white or colored, could succeed. By making the grant toward the Exposition, Congress could thus help both races in these respects; and could do this at the first great opportunity presented since the Civil War. The committee, after Washington's speech, unanimously favoured the grant and Congress a few days later passed the bill. This short speech opened the eyes of the Atlanta leaders to Washington's remarkable powers of persuasion.

When the time for the opening of the Exposition in Atlanta drew near, it was decided to invite a representative of the Negro race to give one of the opening addresses. The late Clark Howell, owner and editor of the powerful southern newspaper, the *Atlanta Constitution*, who was a leading figure on the board of directors arranging the Cotton Exposition, told the author, in his editorial office at Atlanta, the detailed story of what happened in the privacy of that board meeting.

The contribution of the Negro was to be one of the central features of the Exposition. A special building to illustrate Negro progress was being erected on the grounds. Hampton and Tuskegee were organizing this exhibit. "Never up till that time," Mr. Howell said, "had a Negro appeared in the South on any public occasion of an official character in association with white speakers. Booker Washington had rendered eminent service in getting the government appropriation toward erecting the Negro building in the Exposition. He had gone to Washington, spoken to the committee of Congress, made a splendid impression, and secured a unanimous vote. Therefore the suggestion was made in the directors' meeting that Washington would be the appropriate

colored spokesman. A vigorous argument ensued in the committee as to the participation of a Negro with white speakers. When it came to a vote practically all the younger members of the board who had been born since the Civil War thought it entirely proper to select Booker Washington. The opposition came," Clark Howell went on, "from the older members who had grown up before the War; but they soon came to acquiesce in the views of the younger group, and in the end Washington was unanimously chosen to speak."

"When the invitation came to me," Booker Washington commented, "there was not one word of intimation as to what I should say or as to what I should omit. In this I felt that the Board of Directors had paid tribute to me. They knew that by one sentence I could have blasted, in a large degree, the success of the Exposition." He accepted the invitation. He was still a young man, only thirty-nine years old.

A white farmer, a Tuskegee neighbour, accurately diagnosed the prevailing view when he said ominously, "Washington, you have spoken before the Northern white people, the Negroes in the South, and to us country white people in the South; but in Atlanta, tomorrow, you will have before you the Northern whites, the Southern whites, and the Negroes all together. I am afraid that you have got yourself into a tight place."

Booker Washington himself began to wonder whether this was not all too true.

How tense the feeling was may be gauged from the behavior of one of the trustees of Tuskegee Institute, William H. Baldwin, Jr., a warm personal friend of Washington's and vice-president of the Southern Railway system. He was so nervous about the kind of reception that the colored speaker would have and the effect that his speech would create that he could not bring himself to enter the building to hear Booker

Washington, but paced in an agitated way up and down outside until the opening meeting was over.

Washington's own sense of responsibility was overwhelming. He knew that if he failed no colored man could secure such an opening for years to come. He had to be true to the North and to the best element of the white South. Newspapers, North and South, discussed the idea of his speaking. Some of those in the South wrote hostile editorials. "I prepared myself," Washington said, "as best I could for the address, but as the eighteenth of September drew nearer, the heavier my heart became, and the more I feared that my effort would prove a failure and a disappointment." He went over it carefully with Mrs. Washington (his third wife) whose help in the psychological adjustment of his speeches was well known within the Tuskegee inner circle. At the urgent request of his Tuskegee faculty he read the speech to them in a body, and listened to their criticism and comments, mostly favorable. He started for Atlanta with Mrs. Washington and the three children on the morning of September 17, 1895, feeling, he said, "as I suppose a man feels when he is on his way to the gallows." Atlanta was packed with people from all over America and with representatives of foreign governments. "I did not sleep much that night," he confessed. "The next morning before day I went carefully over what I intended to say. I also kneeled down and asked God's blessing upon my effort."

For three hours in the blazing sun he was driven in a procession to the grounds. "The heat, together with my nervous anxiety, made me," he said, "feel about ready to collapse." The auditorium was packed with humanity—thousands of people of both races. Thousands outside failed to get in. The governor of Georgia presided. As Booker Washington walked on the platform and again when he rose to speak considerable



cheering came from the colored people in the gallery, but only faint cheers from a minority of the white folk in the body of the hall.

We owe to James Creelman, the then famous war correspondent of the *New York World*, a realistic picture of Booker T. Washington at that hour. "He turned his wonderful countenance to the sun without a blink of the eyelids and began to talk. There was a remarkable figure, tall, bony, straight as a Sioux chief, high forehead, straight nose, heavy jaws, and strong, determined manner. The sinews stood out on his bronzed neck and his muscular right arm swung high in the air, with a lead pencil grasped in the clinched brown fist. His big feet were planted squarely, with the heels together and the toes turned out. His voice rang out clear and true, and he paused impressively as he made each point. Within ten minutes the multitude was in an uproar of enthusiasm—handkerchiefs were waved, canes were flourished, hats were tossed in the air. The fairest women of Georgia stood up and cheered. It was as if the orator had bewitched them."

The speech was very short. It pointed along the way that he pursued unswervingly throughout his life. From that day to this it has been the central point around which the incessant debate upon his policy and program has revolved. For these reasons it is given here in full as he delivered it.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens:

One third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success. I but convey to you, Mr. President and Directors, the sentiment of the masses of my race when I say that in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress. It is

a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom.

Not only this, but the opportunity here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress. Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the State Legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention or stump-speaking had more attraction than starting a dairy farm or truck garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal: "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back: "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered: "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbor, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"—cast it down in making friends, in every manly way, of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

At this point general applause came from all parts of the hall. Washington went on to develop this point:

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we

learn to dignify and glorify common labor, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted, I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight million Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides. Cast down your bucket among these people who have without strikes and labor wars tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded your railroads and cities, brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. Casting down your bucket among my people, helping and encouraging them as you are doing on these grounds, and with education of head, hand and heart, you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories. While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen. As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, in nursing your children, watching by the sickbed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defense of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one.

Then, holding his outstretched hand aloft, he said:

In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, [and then he clenched his fist] yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

This last sentence brought the whole gathering to its feet in almost delirious cheering. The white South was completely captured by it. When the applause subsided Washington went on:

There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Effort or means so invested will pay a thousand per cent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—"Blessing him that gives and him that takes."

There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable:

*The laws of changeless justice bind  
Oppressor with oppressed;  
And close as sin and suffering joined  
We march to fate abreast.*

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull, against you, the load downward. We shall constitute one third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one third its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance the body politic.

Gentlemen of the Exposition, as we present to you our humble effort at an exhibition of our progress, you must not expect overmuch. Starting thirty years ago with ownership here and there in a few quilts and pumpkins and chickens (gathered from miscellaneous sources), remember, the path that has led from these to the inventions and production of agricultural implements, buggies, steam engines, newspapers, books, statuary carving, paintings, the management of drugstores and banks, has not been trodden without contact with thorns and thistles. While we take pride in what we exhibit as a result of our independent efforts, we do not for a moment forget that our part in this exhibition would fall far short of your expectations but for the constant help that has come to our educational life, not only from the Southern

states, but especially from Northern philanthropists, who have made their gifts a constant stream of blessing and encouragement.

The northern white men's enthusiasm was brought to a climax at this point. Washington then went on to speak the four sentences that have brought down on him the most severe criticism of intellectual colored people; but which, of course, had then no such effect on the southern Negroes who packed the gallery at that meeting:

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extreme folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long, in any degree, ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of those privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera house.

In conclusion, may I repeat that nothing in thirty years has given us more hope and encouragement, and drawn us so near to you of the white race, as this opportunity offered by the Exposition; and here bending, as it were, over the altar that represents the results of the struggles of your race and mine, both starting practically empty-handed three decades ago, I pledge that in your effort to work out the great and intricate problem which God has laid at the doors of the South, you shall have at all times the patient, sympathetic help of my race; only let this be constantly in mind, that while, from representations in these buildings of the product of field, of forest, of mine, of factory, letters, and art, much good will come, yet far above and beyond material benefits will be that higher good, that, let us pray God, will come in a blotting out of sectional differences and racial animosities and suspicions, in a determination to administer absolute justice, in a willing obedience among all classes to the mandates of law. This, this, coupled with our material prosperity, will bring into our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth.

As he finished the speech the whole audience broke into an excited ovation of cheering which surged again as Governor Bullock rose from his chair and rushing across the platform eagerly seized Booker Washington's hand and stood thus for some minutes. Clark Howell of the *Atlanta Constitution* turned to James Creelman of the *New York World* and said, "That man's speech is the beginning of a moral revolution in America." Creelman that day said, "I have heard the great orators of many countries, but not even Gladstone himself could have pleaded a cause with more consummate power than did this angular Negro surrounded by men who had once fought to keep his race in bondage."

The speech contained barely two thousand words. In the few minutes taken to deliver it, however, Booker T. Washington transformed not only the tenor of his own life—for within forty-eight hours he had become a national figure—but the perspective of effort toward the solution of America's race problem. We have here a conspicuous example of the truth of the aphorism, "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose hour has struck". At any earlier hour the bitterness between the North and South and between the races would have been too strong for a speech of practical reconciliation.

All over the United States the newspapers published the speech verbatim. Indeed, the *Boston Transcript* went so far as to say, "The sensation that it has caused in the press has never been equaled," remarking also that the speech "seems to have dwarfed all the other proceedings and the Exposition itself." A lecture bureau telegraphed offering Washington fifty thousand dollars to undertake a lecture tour throughout the nation—an offer that was at once refused by this man who had been obliged a few years earlier to pawn his watch in order to buy fuel. He accepted numerous invitations to speak, but always on a basis of pleading the cause of his race

and never as a professional lecturer. The President of the United States, Grover Cleveland, wrote to him about the speech, saying:

The Exposition would be fully justified if it did not do more than furnish the opportunity for its delivery. Your words cannot fail to delight and encourage all who wish well for your race; and if our colored fellow-citizens do not from your utterances gather new hope and form new determinations to gain every valuable advantage offered them by their citizenship, it will be strange indeed.

Clark Howell summed up the general conviction by saying: "The whole speech is a platform upon which blacks and whites can stand with full justice to each other."

Frederick Douglass had died a few months earlier. At a single bound Booker Washington had leaped into the vacant place, but to exercise leadership on an entirely different line. Within a few weeks a controversy arose which has continued through the years ever since. That debate with regard to the right line of attack upon racial discrimination rears its head persistently in every continent. Nor will its clamor cease as long as any race anywhere is underprivileged or has been retarded in its development under the control of privileged races in a dominant position. Frederick Douglass had, with something approaching genius, pursued the policy of direct and sustained attack. He had even gone to the length of arguing for violence, saying that "blood must flow" and that only "the Negro's strong right arm" would gain for him the position to which he had a right.

The period of reaction after the Civil War, which we have already reviewed, when the South used every available tool, legal and illegal, to reestablish white domination, had intensified the venom between the races and between North and South. Those who were in sympathy with the fighting meth-

ods of that brilliant gladiator, Douglass, inevitably suffered a shock of disappointment, and even felt rising anger, at the more gradual pacific processes of education for agriculture and industry proposed by Booker Washington, who now was acclaimed by the press all over America as the new leader of the race. His acceptance of social separation, in the famous illustration of the fingers and the hand, spelled, to these intransigent fighters, appeasement of the white South through a positive betrayal of the Negro.

The whole tenor of the Atlanta speech gave in embryo the line of policy to which Booker Washington adhered with undeviating persistence up to the end. He held that, in the long view, the Negro in the South, if he made himself a creative skilled citizen, educated and owning land and business, would be for the first time in a position strong enough to demand the political rights to which his ability, character, and material possessions entitled him. The southern white people themselves, he insisted, would then not only accord those political rights to the Negro, but would protect him in their exercise. He called upon all white Americans, of the South and of the North, to give effective support to that enterprise. Forcing tactics, he held, could never secure those rights; and any positions surrendered to the Negro under threat would be insecurely held.

He therefore soft-pedaled the Negroes' political and social claims and concentrated upon stirring the southern whites to give, the northern whites to support, and the Negroes to utilize to the full, all educational facilities that can develop character, skilled capacity, and personal ownership of property. Conversely, however, face to face with southern white audiences, Booker Washington openly criticized state laws and discriminatory practices that allowed an ignorant, law-breaking or drunken white man to vote but prevented a sober,



intelligent colored citizen from doing so. For these and other reasons he was against universal free suffrage in the South for white or black, and stood for an educational and property test "to apply with equal and exact justice to both races."

Meanwhile, the blaze of national fame which the Atlanta speech directed upon Booker Washington gave him a superb opportunity to expand within and beyond the borders of Tuskegee that work of raising the status of a whole people to which his life was dedicated.

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THE LANDSCAPE AHEAD

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At some period in the life of most people who have become famous by outstanding achievement, the individual has, so to speak, stepped out from the undistinguished crowd into the spotlighted center of the stage. The locally well-known lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, for instance, during the prolonged debate with Douglas moved slowly from provincial celebrity to national renown. So, in 1895, Booker Washington's fame spread throughout the English-speaking world, with a swiftness rarely equaled in history up to that time and never rivaled by any Negro. The radius of his repute and influence had gradually lengthened as he built up the Tuskegee Institute. Known in 1881 only in West Virginia and in the little southern township of Tuskegee, his work was discussed in the cotton fields of Macon County through the 'eighties, and by 1890 his leadership was recognized throughout Alabama and even in Georgia. On the day after the Atlanta speech, however, he could have repeated Byron's remark after the publication of the first Cantos of *Childe Harold*: "I awoke one morning and found myself famous."

The mantle of Frederick Douglass, the rugged, passionate Elijah, had fallen upon Booker Washington, the more patient, persistent, and persuasive Elisha. Inevitably, not only did the horizon of his enterprise widen, but new routes of activity opened up along which he was bound to travel if he was not to abdicate from national leadership. That fact sets a knotty problem for a biographer. Up to 1895 his life story presents

material, as we have seen, for a continuous narrative along a single path of development. That was no longer true. While Tuskegee remained the center of his life, his presence there became less and less frequent. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this. The letter from President Cleveland following the Atlanta speech initiated a direct relation with the White House at Washington which was to involve ever-increasing responsibilities as a principal adviser to successive Presidents upon racial issues, involving uncounted journeys to Washington. Secondly, an ever-increasing torrent of invitations to speak poured upon his desk. He could only accept a minority of these; but the thousands of invitations to which he did respond created fresh functions as well as expanding existing activities. For example, the spectacular increase in financial support that these speeches drew forth made possible, first, a succession of new dormitories, workshops, classrooms, hospital, and so on at Tuskegee for the ever more numerous body of students; and, second, fresh adventures in extension work so novel, varied, and widespread that, in earlier days, they would have seemed fantastic dreams. He also, on speaking tours, helped to create the numerous national Negro business and professional leagues that were to do so much for the protection of the rights and advancement of the prosperity of these groups. The speeches also developed into closely-organized good-will tours, especially in the South, aiming at the development of practical interracial coöperation. And, beyond all this, publishers began to clamor for books and articles from his hand, offering a superb channel for advocacy of his cause and for shaping public opinion.

Clearly, to try to tell all these stories in one strict chronological narrative would carry the record into a bewildering maze of dartings to and fro, picking up this thread for a moment while dropping others. The confusion of mind would be

intolerable. The only course that makes it possible to bring the whole scene into true perspective is to watch him exercising one function at a time and take all the provinces in succession. This course is followed in subsequent chapters. It leads, however, to one difficulty, that at the end it would give no picture of coördinated continuous development, no bird's-eye view of the whole landscape. To overcome that difficulty, an attempt will be made to arrive at such a panoramic view. For more momentum and completeness, it may be well first to review rapidly the path that has already been covered before looking at the multiplied activity across the landscape ahead.

The first stage in the journey covered those formative nine years from Booker's birth in the slave cabin in April 1856 down to General Lee's surrender in April 1865. Holding in mind that the very earliest impressions create the trend of a character, we may find the root of his ineradicable faith in co-operative development based on compromise, rather than in activist aggressive campaigning for political and social rights, in the experience of those nine years. For, as a slave boy he was part of a humanely-administered small plantation where the large white family worked in the fields alongside the little group of slaves, and where his mother was an integral part of the domestic pattern of the "big house."

During what George Meredith calls "the malleable moment" of teen-age adolescence, from 1865 to the summer of 1872, the growing boy at Malden, politically free but enduring economic serfdom and domestic squalor, struggled to clamber out of the morass of illiteracy toward the promised land of education, and caught glimpses, in the discipline of Mrs. Ruffner's household, of the gracious simple amenities of cleanly, ordered home life. His inexhaustible patience with crude callow youths at Tuskegee, combined with his rigorous

insistence on cleanly and beautified order in its dining rooms and dormitories, sprang straight from these experiences.

Another stage of nine years began in the autumn of 1872 when he reached Hampton Institute as a raw student. During his apprenticeship there for three years he caught a vision of what rounded education can do with apparently intractable raw material, and saw clearly the interrelationship between technical skills and the moral and spiritual absolutes that feed integrity of character. Returning to Malden, he attempted some "practice games" with his educational knowledge, but without financial backing or equipment, during the years from 1875 to 1878. Then the eight months of study at Wayland Seminary for Negroes in Washington fixed his conviction of the inadequacy of education divorced from skills with the hands. Returning to Malden again to teach, he undertook the brief adventure in public speaking across West Virginia. He was then recalled to Hampton to be housemaster and teacher to American Indians and economically destitute colored students from 1879 to 1881.

By this time all the qualities of character and many of the personal capacities that were to become the driving force and guiding influence of his career had taken shape. His grit and determination in face of obstacles were already blended with that flexibility and initiative in devising means toward conquest without conflict which was to become a hallmark of his activity. His union of firmness with friendliness in handling colleagues and students had already been exercised at Hampton.

Called to Tuskegee at the age of twenty-five, he launched upon fourteen years of sustained, highly successful, but unsensational foundation building. Planning his work there from the outset in terms of serving the whole colored population of his country as an integral part of the American nation, he lifted the seedling out of the flower-pot of local politics

and planted it in the soil, first of the Deep South and then of the United States. The main constitutional milestone on this road was the creation of a nationally representative board of trustees as the governing body, largely superseding in action the legal Alabama State Board of three Tuskegee men.

In 1882 Washington married Fannie N. Smith, who died two years later. In 1885 he married Olivia Davidson, who died soon after the birth of their second son, owing to exposure consequent on removal from their home in a fire. His third marriage, to Margaret J. Murray, took place in 1893. The respective contributions of these three helpmeets to his life are indicated in Chapter XII.

From the initial adventure of purchasing the derelict plantation in 1882, each forward move at Tuskegee until 1895 was one more step in a determined sequence. The organization progressed from the establishment of the brickmaking department in 1883, to include in succeeding years carpentry, night school, printing, cabinetmaking, wagon-building, harness-making and shoemaking, the Farmers' Conferences, first organized in 1890, and in 1892 the hospital and Nurses' Training School. These illustrate Booker Washington's quaintly-phrased slogan, "Next things next!"

By 1895, through this solid, architectonic process, he had created an institution with a large all-Negro faculty, a student body, a group of dignified useful dormitories, dining rooms, workshops and classrooms, agricultural lands, and numerous departments humming with activity. The development had been unspectacular; but the achievement, viewed from the angle of the Institute's origin, was staggering.

No recognition of the nationwide admiration of his character and achievement in the field of education brought more lively or lasting delight to Booker Washington than the action of Harvard University in conferring upon him in 1896 its

degree of Master of Arts. The Latin citation engraved upon the diploma reads as follows: *virum in arte docendi excellentem eundemque genti suae opitulantem, Dei patriaeque ministrum optimum*, which President Eliot, in conferring the degree, rendered in English as "Booker Taliaferro Washington—teacher; wise helper of his race; good servant of God and country."<sup>1</sup> This was the first honorary degree ever conferred by a great American university upon a Negro.<sup>2</sup> The core of Principal Washington's message to Harvard, conveyed by him at the Alumni dinner on the same day was that

... by the way of the shop, the field, the skilled hand, habits of thrift and economy, by way of industrial school and college, we are coming up. We are crawling up, working up, yea, bursting up. Often through oppression, unjust discrimination and prejudice, but through them all, we are coming up; and with proper habits, intelligence and property, there is no power on earth that can permanently stay our progress.

From 1895 onward, Booker Washington, as has already been indicated, rejected all offers, however opulent, of personal fees for lecturing and concentrated his public speaking, which became national in range, first upon proclaiming the policy of Tuskegee as a direct means of acquiring financial help, and, second, upon the development of interracial good will as well as better understanding between North and South.

In the very year of the Atlanta Exposition Washington and his wife were instrumental in establishing the National Association of Colored Women. In 1896 the Misses Phelps Stokes of New York presented to Tuskegee the splendid chapel, built

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<sup>1</sup> A more literal translation of the Latin would run: "distinguished leader in the art of teaching; helper in the advance of his own people [using the unusual word *opitulans* in its essential sense of succorer, aider, uplifter]; the best of servants of God and his country."

<sup>2</sup> Five years later in 1901 Dartmouth College conferred its honorary D.Litt. upon him.

mainly by student labor and of bricks baked by students. In the same year the state legislature of Alabama took a notable step when it provided the Tuskegee Agricultural Experiment Station, which was supplemented in 1897 by the Armstrong-Slater Memorial Agricultural building, with its laboratories, classrooms, and museum. A still wider coöperative advance was led by Booker Washington in 1898 at the first general "Conference for Education in the South." His leadership thus began to be recognized not only in racial matters but in the whole field of education. National appreciation of his contribution, both personally and through the Institute, to the total life of the American community, was symbolized in the same year when, for the first time, a President of the United States visited Tuskegee. President McKinley's example was followed in 1905 by President Theodore Roosevelt. In the two years following 1898 a whole group of important buildings were put up with money acquired through Booker Washington's agency. Thus, in 1900, the Armstrong Memorial Boys' Trades Building (named in honor of his hero, the first head of Hampton Institute), the Girls' Dormitory (Huntington Hall), and the Emery Dormitories for Boys, were opened. The names of the last two recognized the gifts of wealthy white supporters of his program.

A good deal of the actual building of those halls took place during his absence with Mrs. Washington in Britain and Europe. His exhaustion through incessant labor had become painfully evident to his friends, but it was impossible to get him to rest while in America. In 1899 friends in Boston practically forced him to go across the Atlantic by their generous assistance to Tuskegee to compensate for his absence from speaking tours, as well as by buying his travel tickets for him.

During the following year, after their return, Washington, in company with an able journalist, Thomas Fortune, and his



colleague, Emmett Scott, organized the National Negro Business League—the parent of a numerous progeny of subsequent leagues of men in different lines of business and professions, from bankers and lawyers to tailors and funeral directors. His first overseas enterprise, in the same year, launched a number of Tuskegee graduates and teachers across the Atlantic to introduce better methods of cotton-raising into Africa.

An immense expansion of knowledge about Booker Washington followed the publication of his *Up from Slavery* in 1901.<sup>3</sup> From that time onward a continuous flow of books and magazine articles from his pen fostered all the projects that he was advancing for the sake of his race. By this time, he had attracted the support of numerous financial magnates. His favorite and remarkably successful practice of suggesting to each wealthy sympathizer a specific project that was in tune with his or her preoccupation was illustrated in 1900, when he persuaded Andrew Carnegie to present to Tuskegee the library building that bears his name. To encourage thrift, he initiated the Savings Bank Department; he saw in the practice of thrift a potent lever for lifting his people out of economic bondage. The practice of saving money was, in effect, a revolutionary innovation in the life of unnumbered Negro families, an escalator leading up out of helpless, hopeless economic drudgery.

Of all the events during the year 1901 the least conspicuous was the most momentous, the establishment, on Booker Washington's suggestion, of the Southern Education Board. This assemblage of outstanding educators and financial leaders, linked two years later with another offspring of his inventive enterprise, the General Education Board, helped him to steer so much support toward enterprises like Hampton and Tus-

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<sup>3</sup> Serially in the *Outlook* in 1900.

kegee as to arouse some resentment on the part of colleges and universities for Negroes that concentrated on what is called "higher education." He rebutted with vigor the charge that he was only interested in industrial training and emphasized his positive advocacy of fully-rounded education.

In the years between 1901 and 1908 his intimacy with Theodore Roosevelt, during the latter's dramatic and reforming Presidency, widened at once the area of his influence and the demands upon his time and talents. His close advisory contact with the more cautious President Taft went on until 1913.

In the three years leading up to the twenty-fifth anniversary of Tuskegee in 1906, Washington was able to realize a cherished ambition by buying some two hundred acres as the site of a model village for the homes of teachers, and building three notable halls, one presented in memory of his earliest Negro hero, Frederick Douglass. To the galaxy of governmental, educational, ecclesiastical, and financial leadership that he attracted to the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration he was able to report that, from the tiny beginnings in 1881, his enterprise now housed some sixteen hundred students on two thousand three hundred acres, working, worshipping, and living in eighty-three buildings, and taking instruction from a faculty of one hundred and fifty-six. Already the endowment was in excess of \$1,225,000, with an annual income of \$180,000, while the property was valued at over three quarters of a million. Looking back to that early tense struggle to bake his first bricks, Washington must have had peculiar pleasure in reporting that no less than 970,000 bricks had been manufactured by the students in that year of celebration.

During these years a silent and unspectacular, yet most vital, achievement came to fruition: the assembling of a large competent all-Negro faculty, bound together by a team spirit and capable of training callow young men and women to be

skilled citizens of integrity in many fields of work. This had never before been attempted in America or Africa. The task differed from that of a white university or college in that the source of supply was at that time so drastically restricted. Prolonged talks with many of those who were drawn into the faculty by Booker Washington from many places, including the world-famous George Washington Carver, deepened the author's sense of the courage, imaginative insight into character, and blended firmness and flexibility that marked his handling of this problem. For these reasons, a whole chapter of this book is given to that accomplishment.

The year of the twenty-fifth anniversary also witnessed one of the epoch-marking advances in the development of Tuskegee as a center which sprang directly from those burning experiences of Washington's among the tumbledown cabins in the area during 1881. With the help of the millionaire, Morris K. Jesup, he launched what was called the Movable School Farm Demonstration work. This gave his projects a far wider radius of influence. Indeed, in a few years, white as well as Negro farmers far and wide were benefiting by its colorful and practical exhibitions of improved agriculture made upon the farmer's own piece of land. Soon the Federal government adopted the idea; and later it spread overseas to Africa. Just as near to his heart was the initiative taken, also among scattered rural Negro groups, by the wealthy Quakeress, Anna T. Jeanes of Philadelphia. In 1907 she backed him and the principal of Hampton, Dr. Hollis B. Frissell, for whom Booker Washington had a strong admiration, in launching the famous Negro Rural School Fund, which was later to radiate stimulus to the heart of tropical Africa.

Africa itself came vividly into the center of Booker Washington's preoccupation in 1908 and 1909 in absorbing discussions with President Roosevelt and later with Taft, and

with their Secretaries of State, about the "Black" Republic of Liberia, at that time in a perilous condition. The confidence of the former Chief Executive of the nation in Booker Washington, and his sense of the value of his work, were further evidenced in 1910, when Theodore Roosevelt accepted an invitation to become a member of the Board of Trustees of Tuskegee.

The last of the numerous groups of buildings to be put up to cope with the ever-expanding work that Booker Washington's genius was untiringly developing followed each other in rapid succession in the years 1910 to 1913: Tompkins Hall (student dining room), the White Hall (girls' dormitory), the Milbank Agricultural Building, the John A. Andrew Memorial Hospital, and a new power plant and laundry. In a profoundly real sense Booker Washington at Tuskegee could have repeated the well-known claim to be seen on Sir Christopher Wren's statue in St. Paul's in London: *si monumentum requiris circumspice*.<sup>4</sup>

Another, but largely hidden, monument to his influence lay in the changed character of so many of his students. Central to this process was his use of the splendid chapel. Not only on Sundays, but on most of the days of the week, a period was spent there by all the students. In those times of quiet recollection of values rather than of facts, he gave hundreds of those inimitable talks of his—direct, practical, humorous, even naïve, while at the same time spiritual, profoundly serious, and far-sighted. Some of them were gathered in 1902 into a volume called *Character Building*. Characteristic quotations from them are given in a later chapter.

In 1909 Washington was again persuaded to cross the Atlantic for a tour in Europe. How far it was from being a care-free holiday was revealed in his book, *The Man Farthest*

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<sup>4</sup> If you would see my monument, look around you.

*Down*, published after his return. Nowhere does he display more cogently his power to grasp realistically the essentials of the human scene, however novel its setting might be, than in this profound portrayal of the life of European peasants and artisans. For this reason a whole chapter has been dedicated to his transatlantic experiences.

Meanwhile, the Research Department, to which he had appointed Monroe Work, had developed its incalculably valuable resources for giving information about all aspects of Negro life in every part of the world. Washington expressed his sense of its helpfulness in the preface to his two-volume work, *The Story of the Negro: the Rise of the Race from Slavery*, published in 1909. The work of the Research Department culminated in 1912 in the publication of the first edition of *The Negro Year Book*.

The statesmanlike and adventurous schemes that Booker Washington nourished for ever-widening circles of educational activity in the heart of the cotton belt were completed in the last years of his life. To the Jeanes Fund for training rural teachers and equipping them on the field and the Jesup Movable School system, he now added a plan for building little model schools, underwritten by Julius Rosenwald.

One of the last and most fruitful of Washington's national enterprises was developed in the last full year of his life: the National Negro Health Week was inaugurated in 1914. At the same time, helped by the Federal Smith-Lever Act for encouraging agricultural education, multiple "short-course schools" were begun in rural areas on the farmers' own land all over Alabama.

We now turn to watch him pouring apparently tireless energy and inexhaustible fertility of inventiveness into the diversified yet essentially integrated channels of service that opened to him at Atlanta just twenty years before his death.

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## EDUCATION AT TUSKEGEE FOR THE GOOD LIFE

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Booker Washington's outstanding achievements were given publicity during his lifetime and therefore can be largely retold from printed records. His files of correspondence tell the story of his official dealings with others in the interests of his institution. The person "in his habit as he was" is rarely revealed through either of these sources. Yet to fail to see that aspect is to miss the real man. Fortunately, the author's talks on the campus, and with scores of his ex-students now serving in many walks of life, have rescued from oblivion, before some of these colleagues died, significant parts of the recollections of men and women in daily contact with him for many years. Certainly it was in those intimate interviews, which supplied the material of a large part of the next three chapters, that the true lineaments of the man's character became more vividly real; and unless those traits thus captured are recorded now they will be lost for all time.

Booker Washington was never conquered, as so many educators are, by the immense tool that he had created. To the end he fought incessantly to sustain contacts with his students and faculty because he saw in those human relations the essential channel of all education. Any clear-eyed observer who seeks a reason for the sense of frustration common in universities, colleges, and schools in this century, will find it, on the one hand, in the failure to sustain the personal relationship between students and teachers, with its consequent communication of the moral and spiritual values of life as distinct from

facts; and, on the other hand, in the failure of the students and faculty to maintain active relations with the community in which they live and work. Washington sustained close contact to the limit of his powers with both his faculty and his students, and particularly with the rural Negro community from which the largest single percentage came. He did this with a characteristic blend of easy comradeship and patriarchal authority. And he tried to inspire his faculty to practice the same relationships with each other and with their students.

In the following chapters we shall watch him in intercourse with his students and his faculty, and then in his dealings with Negro farmers.

Dr. W. E. Burghardt DuBois, whose sensitive handling of English is recognized by readers of *Darkwater*<sup>1</sup> and *The Souls of Black Folk*,<sup>2</sup> has summed up vividly the nature of the students for whom Booker Washington was shaping Tuskegee and the obstacles that had to be overcome if success was to be achieved. In his Commencement address on *Education and Work* at Howard University in Washington (June 6, 1930), Dr. DuBois said that the problem after emancipation and the collapse of Reconstruction was

in its larger aspects, such as in all ages human beings of all races and nations have faced; but it was new in 1865 as all Time is new; it was concentrated and made vivid and present because of the immediate and pressing question of the education of a vast group of the children of former slaves. It was the ever new and age-young problem of Youth, for there had arisen in the South a Joseph who knew not Pharoah—a black man who was not born in slavery. What was he to become? Whither was his face set? How should he be trained and educated? His fathers were slaves, for the most part, ignorant and poverty-stricken; emancipated in

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<sup>1</sup> New York, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Chicago, 1903.

the main without land, tools nor capital—the sport of war, the despair of economists, the grave perplexity of Science. Their children had been born in the midst of controversy, of internecine hatred, and in all the economic dislocation that follows war and civil war. In a peculiar way and under circumstances seldom duplicated, the whole program of popular education became epitomized in the case of these young black folk.

In that setting we watch Booker Washington starting out day by day in his own way to grapple with the problem of the student. At dawn every day when he was at home at Tuskegee his favourite gray horse was brought to his gate and hitched to a post where it waited for him. McBride, who for many years was in charge of all the horses on the campus, told me that a remarkable intimacy of understanding grew up between the Principal and his gray companion: "He knew the horse and the horse knew him." The exercise on this spirited animal, which stood sixteen and a half hands high, was his main recreation. Normally, just after dawn he came out and mounted the horse and started to trot over the farmlands, down the dirt roads, and in and out among the many Institute buildings and faculty homes. The exercise was in one sense by no means a complete relaxation. Some instructor, rising from his bed at six o'clock in the morning and peering out of his window, would be startled to see the Principal seated on the familiar horse outside his garden, making ominous notes in his pocketbook. He would than recall with chagrin how he had intended to mend that broken pane of glass into which his wife had stuffed some old newspapers to keep out the draft, or to repair the hinges of that rickety garden gate and the broken palings in his fence, while his hedge had stared accusingly at him for weeks awaiting the clippers.

A few minutes later the Principal was again at his ease making notes at the back of another teacher's plot of land.



In this case the man might well wonder what could be wrong: actually Booker Washington had been "tipped off" with regard to the good little orchard that this instructor and his wife had been developing, and he had come to enjoy seeing it for himself.

It may be asked what these surveys of the homes of teachers had to do with the lives of the students. In Booker Washington's eyes the homes of the instructors were of central moment in the scheme of education. All the eloquent expression of theory in the world would be more than canceled out by shiftless, wasteful, or dilatory practice at home and in the garden.

That evening in chapel the morning experiences, although, of course, without pillorying or praising any person by name, became a parable in the Principal's talk. The sea of young faces alternately laughed and sobered as he told how on the campus one man and his wife were growing peaches on their own soil, while outside another house he had found empty tins with labels of peaches canned in New Jersey a thousand miles away; one house looked down-at-heel and neglected while another was spruce, well-set-up, and a source of pride; and he showed that the whole difference between dependent gloomy poverty and happy independent self-respect was dramatized in those contrasts.

His standard for the care of students was that they should have the needed comforts and no luxuries. In cold weather he sent an agent unobtrusively round all the buildings at night to see that the rooms were adequately heated. When he was at the Institute he often appeared after his morning ride, but before taking his own breakfast, at the Tompkins Dining Hall, which seats two thousand students and has a large dining room for the teachers alongside. If the coffee was lukewarm, the cereal watery, or the eggs stale, the guilty person was

sought out and dealt with. This insistence with regard to food was primary with him.

Every table in that great hall had in the center flowers or mosses gathered by a student in the woods, and a prize was given each Sunday for the most artistic decoration, the Principal acting as judge. "This decoration is too gaudy," he would say, and take out the excess of color and point out the improvement. Then, his voice rising in indignation he would seize a vase containing two or three wilted flowers and exclaim, "The boy or girl who did this is guilty of something far worse than bad taste, and that is laziness." He would then hold an impromptu examination of what the students were eating, and then plunge through the door into the kitchen on his incessant drive against negligence, squalor, rubbish, and mismanagement.

He might find that the nightwatchmen had eaten at one table and left dirty tablecloths which had not been removed before breakfast was served to the students. He would send for the matron and ask why boys should be taking their meals on soiled linen. He would stop the meal until the change had been made, and then grant extra time for the students to finish eating. Monitors were appointed in the dining rooms. If a boy appeared with grimy shoes or soiled hands he had no food until the offending detail was put right. This meticulous care made permanent impressions on the boys. One who had come from the backwoods of that Indian territory which later became Oklahoma had, I recall, fresh in his memory after a quarter of a century his first contact with the Principal. This boy, with the other new students, was at their special table under the clock.

"Why aren't you eating?" came the Principal's voice.

"Doctor, we ain't got nuthin'."

He took all the food off the table sacred to the football team

and put it on that of the new students. We have no record as to the reaction of the football boys! Booker Washington no doubt was sure that they had resources for securing more. The same student at a later meal was challenged by the Principal for leaving a good deal of food on his plate.

"What is the matter with the food?"

"Nothing, doctor; I just don't want it."

"Then don't eat round it. Don't take anything on your plate that you can't eat. I won't have you waste food."

Annoyance on the part of the cooks, teachers, or students at this practice of what the cynic might call "snooping" had no effect upon Booker Washington. Cool judgment made it clear that he was not moving round in order to find fault, but had a single-minded zeal to gear the whole Institute in all its parts to the highest pitch of attainable efficiency. And he knew that he was dealing with a race whose original disciplines in tribal Africa had been wholly destroyed by the degrading corruptions of slavery under the white man. He was set on their acquiring those disciplines that mark real manhood and womanhood. He knew the absolute value of the fact that "Manners makyth man." In his own garden in overalls he would dig and hoe and prune, and he even killed his own hogs, thus sharing in all the activities that he was perpetually enjoining on his faculty and students.

Students have repeatedly recorded their astonishment at the way in which his injunctions still continue to ring in their memories across many years. One of them said, for instance, "When I look back and recall what poor, crude, undeveloped material we boys were, I can see the immense value of his constant reiteration that 'little things count.' The habits on which he insisted have stayed through the years. For example, he would not let us cut across lawns and make paths. The other day up at Northwestern University I started to take a

short cut, but I remembered Booker T. Washington and took the road round!"

Remembering that during all his boyhood life he had slept at night in his day clothes and had not even known on entering Hampton what sheets were for, Booker Washington took special care to see that the students learned right sleeping habits. A man who had, as a student, been on monitor duty in the dormitories told of the difficulty the monitors had in getting many of the new students to undress at night and, for the first time in their lives, get into nightshirts or pajamas. To many students Booker Washington gave the impression that he believed the regular use of the toothbrush was at the foundation of civilization. His great emphasis on such details has been criticized as carrying attention to detail to extremes. Unquestionably, however, he was absolutely right in this. He knew, from his own bitter experience, the weakening of fiber that comes from slatternly shiftlessness, the flabbiness and inefficiency which follow when men fall short of scrupulous cleanliness and tidiness. He knew, as all do who have lived in relative solitude in an area of barbarism, the astonishing power of habits associated with self-respect to sustain morale. He recalled how quick the cynical eager critic of the colored people is to label the whole community with the demerits of slack individuals. He recognized, further, how deeply ingrained in the mind of his own people was the feeling, inherited from the days of slavery, that work was drudgery and that the ideal was to be like the white masters, "sittin' round doin' nuthin'." Freedom from slavery meant, at the outset, freedom from work. As one of his ex-students who became a leading member of his faculty put it: "The Principal showed us the great gulf that there is between working and being worked."

On reaching his office after his early ride and breakfast the

Principal dictated notes to members of the faculty praising, criticizing, and suggesting. A few examples indicate his method:

"Now is the time to put the large incubator to its fullest capacity . . . I saw the incubator this morning and found that it was almost empty. If you do not hatch your eggs within the next few days you can do nothing until next fall." That was in March 1915 within a few months of his death.

"In examining a portion of the orchard this morning," he wrote in May 1914 to the same member of his staff, "I find there are entirely too many dead trees. The vacancies ought to be more carefully and promptly filled by young trees. We have entirely too much waste land in the peach orchard. We have not put in young trees to fill vacancies, and where we have done so we have waited too long. . . This does not mean that you are to increase the present acreage but that you are to make the very best use of all the land that we now have by planting it with trees."

While stimulus by criticism filled many of the notes that he dictated each morning when at the Institute, others bore the spur of encouragement, as in the following characteristic note written in 1914: "I was very much pleased when the foreman at the steam works told me this morning that all the brick work in connection with the erection of the houses had been done by students. . . . I think this speaks a great deal in favour of the training which we have given the students in brick masonry." That note was dictated to Robert R. Taylor, the gifted craftsman to whose practical genius the Institute owes the blended grace and stability of the chapel. This was all the more gratifying in that the same man had the previous year received a note which read: "I was at the brickyard this morning and stayed in the vicinity some time. Only half the men were at work; the others were standing idly talking. . . . I

was told that Mr. G— was in charge but could not see or hear anything of him. I fear this is the beginning of piling up a deficit at the brickyard." His next letter to the same craftsman asked him to see that all the screens and doors of the hospital were properly equipped to exclude flies.

How sensitive Booker Washington was to the feelings of retarded members of the community may be gauged from his talk in Chapel just before one of the great annual Farmers' Conferences. He said to the students: "For some days to come hundreds of farmers will be on these grounds. Many of them have no education at all, nor any of the training that you enjoy here. Their behavior will differ from that to which we are accustomed here. They will appear at table without coats or collars. Remember that these people are our guests. We are here to share with them all that we have. Anyone who fails to go out of his way to be cordial and helpful to them has not got the spirit of Tuskegee."

He carried his belief in constant activity to great lengths. The old adage, "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," almost possessed him. "One day," said the superintendent of horses, "I drove down to meet him at the station. I was sitting there with folded hands. 'Can't you find something to do?' came the Principal's voice. 'Can't you read something? Haven't you a book? Here, read this paper. I hate to see anybody idle.'"

This preoccupation with purposeful activity he felt to be highly important where boy and girl students were in each others' company. "I hate to see you girls lying on the grass gazing at the sky," he would say. When girl students had a dance only the monitors or officers were allowed to dance with them. This helped, of course, to make the position of monitor more strongly coveted and raised its status. One entertaining interchange of notes between Booker Washing-

ton and the Dean of Women, in which girls are charged with having invited students who were not monitors to their dance, ends with an apology from the girls, who pleaded in extenuation that the boys were members of the dance band! Experts who were called in to examine standards of morality in regard to boy and girl relationships reported their astonishment at the high plane achieved, especially in view of the home background from which so many came.

The second Mrs. Washington was admired by the students as "an aristocratic woman." She wore her authority with grace. "She was," said an ex-student, "the mother of the school. She was devoted to the girls. She trusted the girls and they lived up to it. She was a matchmaker in a slight way. She strongly upheld the necessity of certain qualities in boys that would make them good husbands. She would point out a certain boy who had the qualities that she found admirable. He soon found himself the center of a group of girls!"

Booker Washington personally interested himself in the relationships of the men and women students. The amount of social mingling permitted under his principalship is indicated in a report submitted to him by the dean of women students in April 1909, saying that men and women students met "at general sociables, officers' monthly entertainments, games in the gymnasium and on the athletic field, seniors' class meetings, individual calls in the sitting room at Alabama Hall, special entertainments given for them by teachers and school-mates, and supper with each other on Sunday nights."

Vivid glimpses into emotional clashes among the girl students suggest that at times he must have felt sorry that he ever intervened in their troubles. We wonder what upheaval lies behind a girl's note declaring: "I can stand on a stack of Bibles as high as heaven and say that it is Lulu Ivory's coat, and that that coat will condemn that girl in judgment!"

The dining room and the dormitory, the chapel and the home, clothing, washing, and social engagements were all linked up by Booker Washington with the farm and the brickyard, the wagon-builder's shop, the blacksmith's forge, and the carpenter's bench as tools of education. Through them all a quiet process of revolution was transforming the young men and women who attended the Institute. Their attitudes and standards of value, indeed their whole character, were remolded.

Boys and girls who at home had always snatched a hunk of cornbread and a slab of fried meat and munched them while walking to the cottonfield now sat down three times a day to a neatly-laid table to take their food with knife, fork, and spoon from clean plates and bowls. Thus they found themselves unconsciously learning profound lessons of courtesy and restraint, camaraderie and mutual respect through the sharing of a common meal. Young women, whose mothers knew no methods of cooking beyond the parched dough and pork fried over the open fire, learned not only the health-giving cooking of balanced meals, but the laying of tables and pride in the cleanliness of crockery and cutlery. Young men who, like Booker Washington himself when he first went to Hampton, had never seen a sheet or slept on a bedstead, worn nightclothes, had a bath, or used a toothbrush, were led forward into the disciplined self-respect of cleanly, controlled living. A new sense of fulfillment grew as they mastered one skill after another. The student who found himself challenged if he arrived in classroom or dining room in clothing that lacked its quota of buttons or was spotted with grease, carried that standard of behavior back to the cabin whence he came.

This seemingly ordering of the minutiae of daily affairs Booker Washington always held to lie at the foundation of the good



life. His goal was to equip each student with skills through which he or she could wrest from the soil or from industry stable support for a healthy family life. But from the outset he shaped every tool of education so that each graduate should go out into the world with the will and the capacity to enrich the whole life of his community by his personal character and attitudes as well as by economic endowment. Without any elaborate discussion of sociological principles or of psychological or pedagogical theory, he made all the work at Tuskegee an integrated process of projects geared to supply community needs. Nor was his conception of community in any sense sectional; he was not thinking of the interests of one race as opposed to those of another, nor did he give priority to one part of the nation—the South against the North, or vice versa. He saw all persons, regardless of race, as of equal value in the eyes of their Creator, and he shaped his education to develop to the full their inner capacity for the service of each other. He saw Negro and white, South and North, as “bound up in the bundle of life” together. He passionately desired to prove through practical processes to the whole nation the value of the educated Negro; to show to white and colored that they rise or fall together.

The classroom work at Tuskegee, in what came to be called the Academic Department, with book and blackboard and the writing of assignments, held its equal place by the side of handicrafts. The two, indeed, were closely interlocked. In the English classes Booker Washington and his increasing staff of teachers found that, if one student was set to write on “The Freedom of the Seas” and another on “My trade—blacksmithing”, the prose style of the second was much simpler and more direct and vigorous than that of the former, because he was expressing in the best words he knew something that sprang from his own experience and was real to

himself. Grouped round the project of "a model house," the men students wrote papers on its construction, materials, foundations, and stresses, while the girl students let their imaginations have full play in essays on its interior decoration and furnishings. They wrote better English on those subjects than on "Hannibal crossing the Alps." Arithmetic was similarly harnessed to the "project" method. For instance, an early photograph of a classroom in the Academic Department shows a blackboard on which is worked out a problem in brick masonry: "How many bricks in a wall 75 feet long and 5 feet high and 18 inches thick, allowing 22 bricks to the cubic foot?"

Professor Paul Monroe, head of the Department of Education in Teachers College, Columbia University, visited Tuskegee in 1904 when Booker Washington had fully developed this curriculum. He declared later, in recording his impressions, that at Tuskegee,

I find illustrated the two most marked tendencies which are being formulated in the most advanced educational thought. . . . These are: first, the endeavor to draw the subject matter of education, or the 'stuff' of schoolroom work, directly from the life of the pupils; and, second, to relate the outcome of education to life's activities, occupations and to the duties of the pupil in such a way that the connection is made directly and immediately between schoolroom work and the other activities of the person being educated. This is the ideal at Tuskegee, and, to a greater extent than in any other institution I know of, the practice; so that the institution is working along not only the lines of practical endeavor, but of the most advanced educational thought. [The Institute is] of quite as great interest to the student of education on account of the illumination it is giving to educational theory, as to those interested practically in the elevation of the Negro people and in the solution of a serious social problem.

This tribute to a Negro institution from a white man of such high standing in the educational world throws into well-

merited relief Booker Washington's genius for leadership in the field of education. It is still more remarkable when we remember that Dr. Monroe's praise, of which any white educator with the most distinguished academic and cultural background would have been proud, was earned by a man who, born as a slave and reared in the most primitive condition among illiterates, had been forced to work and struggle for his own education.

Booker Washington always hotly denied that any real distinction existed between "higher" and industrial education. He held that practice and theory are indivisible. He employed various members of faculty who had earned university degrees of a high order; but they must have the power to harness their knowledge to projects of immediate value to the student as he went out into life. To his critics, however, his horror of "white collar" education divorced from manual training seemed to be an objectionable obsession. Certainly he reiterated his insistence upon the acquisition of practical skills in season and out of season. "I know too many men," he affirmed, "with enough paper diplomas to boil a pot, but not enough skill or initiative to grow or get a cabbage to put in the pot!" On one occasion in Harlem, New York, he said, "I find hundreds of Negroes with university degrees and no work; educated, but hungry; some incapable of working with their hands, and some too proud to do so." This did not mean that he was blind to the economic evils and racial discrimination that too often created Negro unemployment.

He hated the immense gulf between the poverty-stricken mass of illiterate or semi-literate Negroes, lethargic through malnutrition and lacking any agricultural or industrial skill, and the tiny minority of the cultured. That wide gap he set out to fill with skilled artisans, efficient farmers, and prosperous shopkeepers. An analysis that he caused to be made in

1906 showed that 38% of the heads of households from which Tuskegee students came were engaged in farming, and of these 76% owned part or all of the land that they tilled; while the next largest group of 23% were engaged in mechanical and manufacturing pursuits.<sup>3</sup> He was therefore insistent that priority in his day be given to concentration on the agricultural and industrial side of education. It was all-important to get away from mendicancy, even, if it had to be, at the temporary expense of culture. But he never minimized the need for a cultural education. An incident related to me by Mrs. Holsey at Tuskegee illustrates his attitude. When President McKinley visited Tuskegee in 1898 Booker Washington pointed out his eldest son. "He is going to Fisk University," he remarked, "but before going he will learn here how to lay bricks." Fisk is, of course, the distinguished Negro university with a predominantly academic curriculum. Somewhat later we find a note from the Principal to his son, Booker T. Jr., expressing gratification that he has successfully built a new schoolhouse at Greensboro: "This will greatly please Mr. Rosenwald."

No effort was too great for Washington to make if he could help educators from other areas, white and colored, to grasp the aims that he made concrete in the Institute, and by winning their understanding, help the process forward. For instance, when a conference of white educational superintendents from all over Alabama was meeting at Montgomery, he brought them all by special train to Tuskegee to give them at first hand a new angle of vision on the young Negro and what education could do for him. A considerable number of those who went on that trip to Tuskegee positively hostile to the education of the colored people determined as they left

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<sup>3</sup> See statistical table with Washington's memorandum, appended at end of this chapter.

to work for its development. Before he addressed them Booker, characteristically, had the New Testament message read to them: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Washington made the annual Commencement exercises educative for the thousands of colored people whom he attracted from all sides to attend. So eager were the farmers and their families to see what was happening that as early as three o'clock in the morning farm wagons, four-wheeled mule buggies, ox-carts, "floats," and other vehicles loaded with colored folk of all ages began to roll in. For an unbroken line of three miles the procession could be seen making its way to the campus. By the time the exercises began, some nine thousand people were assembled. Barely a third of them could be crowded into the spacious chapel. They were shown through all the workshops and over all the fields of the farm, and had the best agricultural exhibits and the methods of cultivation explained to them.

On a raised platform the students dramatized the subjects which they learned. A young man in overalls leaped on to the platform, pulled the string of a steam whistle, and started a stationary engine; a young carpenter ran in to finish work on a model house erected there, while a mason completed a brick wall; a student-farmer led on a cow and milked her, while a muscular young blacksmith shod a horse. Meanwhile, on the same platform, girls were busy at laundry and ironing by the best methods; a young dressmaker tried a new garment on a girl student; and boys, sitting cross-legged, tailored suits. All round were piled the best pumpkins, potatoes, maize, cotton, and other products of the Institute farm.

Students who expected, on the model of many white colleges to be asked to prepare an oration for that Commencement Day on, say, "The Speeches of Daniel Webster," were

startled when their Principal announced that the subject would be "Cabbages"! When the student had worked upon his oration for weeks, however, and then delivered it on the great day to hundreds of parents from farms and plantations, he saw—and made them see—the cabbage in a new and worthy perspective in relation to the progress of the race.

In lecturing to a class of boys himself, Washington generally left room for self-expression. An unusual thrill, for instance, was given one day when a class was studying with him a geography textbook on Africa. The author of the book said that the Bushmen were the lowest type of human being to be found in Africa—a degraded and hopeless group. A boy at the back of the room raised his hand and said that he had recently come from South Africa; that his mother was a Bushwoman and his father a Hottentot, and that he had been born in the bush. He went to his room and returned with photographs and other material to illustrate his description of his people and to show that, having been hunted like wild beasts for over a century by stronger tribes because of their fierce love of independence, they were really the victims of cruel circumstances. As this boy stood near the head of the large class of students, his words were listened to with close attention by the others and by the teacher. Washington drove home his own clear conviction that it is hazardous to judge that "the man farthest down" is there because of any inherent inferiority.

At odd intervals Washington held mass meetings of students at which they had carte blanche to tell him what they thought was wrong in the Institute or what kept them from being happy there. Some teachers resented the unbridled criticism that he permitted on these occasions. He was certain, however, that he could eliminate the unjust complaints, and that valid criticisms were valuable in helping him to increase the harmony and influence of the Institute.

On every evening except Saturday, just before the students' bedtime, Washington had short prayers in the chapel or the dining room, with a twenty-five minute service on Tuesdays and Thursdays; all of these the students were required to attend. These services were linked with the Biblical Department (under Mr. Whittaker) which concentrated on simple direct teaching of the content and meaning for life of God's will as shown in the Bible. A vocational school was created for those students who intended to do full-time religious work. Here the curriculum was framed on lines calculated to keep the minister alongside the real needs of a rural community.

Booker Washington's passion for the spirituals and his encouragement of the choir, which became famous, inspired in successive generations of students deep intelligent pride in that unique contribution to the world's beauty. The trainer of that choir for many years was a musician, half Jew and half Negro, who had himself written a symphony.

The music and the Chapel are closely linked through the remarkable chancel windows which Washington caused to be made. They record in stained glass of real beauty the aspirations of the Negro in America expressed in the religious folkmusic of the race. The eleven windows are the work of the Lamb Studios in New York, where the father, sons, and daughter of that family expressed in this medium their active good will toward the Negro. A progressive theme, with moving variations, runs through the pictures. The windows to the right illustrate the experience of the fathers of the race. Illustrating "Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land" is the grim figure of the Egyptian taskmaster looming over the slaves bent at their toil. Their faces are lifted to the sky in the second panel to the words of "Swing low, sweet chariot, Comin' for to carry me home." The longing for a new life of freedom is carried further in the third panel, which shows the Negro on the bank of the river on the other side of which

is the Promised Land, singing, "Deep river, my home is over Jordan." Above this panel run the horses with the chariot, "comin' for to carry me home." In that new world all men stand at the judgment bar of God, as the next panel shows, to the chant, "My Lord, what a mournin' when the stars begin to fall."

The windows to the left turn from the past to stimulate the will to advance in the new generation. More active conflict with obstacles and the joy of triumph are expressed in these panels. Impetuous youth wins victory over difficulties in the picture showing how "Joshua fit de battle o' Jericho an' de walls come tumblin' down." He then rises to new heights in the subsequent window: "We are climbin' Jacob's ladder," with the picture of Jacob asleep and the angels ascending and descending. The ultimate goal is illustrated in the spiritual, "Roll, Jordan, roll; I want to go to heaven when I die." The constant urge to rise is reiterated in the last panel on the left, where youth, accompanied on trumpets, chants "Every round goes higher and higher." And this is followed by "O sing, all the way, hear the angels singing."

The meaning of this faith in the life of the Negro is gathered up in the central window. A panel at the bottom symbolizes the song, "Steal away, steal away to Jesus", with its memory of the days when the Negro, forbidden to assemble for worship because the masters feared it would lead on to rebellion, crept away to the woods. Another reveals the sense of the voice of God calling "by the lightnin' an' the thunder." Crowning the whole picture are Negroes in exultation singing, "Goin' to shout all ober God's hebben."

The eyes now move to the center of that middle window, with the culminating message as we see the three Magi shown as the black, the white and the yellow—the African, the European and the Asiatic branches of the human family—



joined in adoration before the Christ child in whom at length "there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

In these windows we find inextricably mingled, as in the spirituals, the symbolism of freedom from slavery and race discrimination in this world with the blissful anticipation of heaven.

A man who stands in that chapel facing two thousand young men and women may well be, as was the author, as deeply moved as he would be in any cathedral. The chapel was built in 1896 as the gift of two of the most farsighted and consistent friends the colored people of Africa and America have ever had, the late Caroline and Olivia E. Phelps Stokes of New York. Every brick in it, save one, was made on the campus by students of the Institute, and was laid by students. The architect was a colored member of the faculty, Robert R. Taylor. The one brick that was not made at Tuskegee Institute came from the little cabin at Malden in West Virginia in which the boy, Booker Washington, first began to dream of education for himself and then for his race. And as generation after generation of eager youth assemble in that chapel, and gaze at those windows, their hopes and ambitions are linked with the suffering and struggles of their forefathers and with the destiny of their race as it rises to play its part in the whole community of mankind, as seen by them in the context of loyalty to the Christian meaning of life.

That inner sap of Christian faith constantly fed Booker Washington's life and the spirit of the Institute. Often, especially in the early days, colored preachers in Alabama would tell their flocks that the school at Tuskegee "wasn't Methodist and wasn't Baptist, it wasn't Presbyterian or 'piscopalian, and it wasn't Christian!" With all of those negatives Booker Washington would agree except the last. As he himself said in *Up from Slavery*, "While a great deal of stress is laid upon the

industrial side of the work at Tuskegee, we do not neglect or overlook in any degree the religious and spiritual side. The school is strictly undenominational, but it is thoroughly Christian, and the spiritual training of the students is not neglected. Our preaching services, prayer meetings, Sunday School, Christian Endeavour Society, Y.M.C.A. and various missionary organizations testify to this."

His talks in the chapel were central to his conception of education. In those addresses he expressed the root principle of the faith that was in him, distilling the quintessence of his wisdom as distinct from knowledge, and giving inspiration for living rather than techniques for making a living. Thousands of his ex-students in all parts of the United States would echo the witness of those who have told of their decisive influence on life. One emphasis is on the effect of his talks about success in good living being dependent upon steady formation of cleanly orderly habits. A boy, for instance, who registered as a new student in September 1912, told years later how he went on the first Sunday night to hear Booker Washington. "His title was," he said, "'Have a place to put everything, and put everything in that place.' He said, 'There are many people who have no system about their work or home. Often you visit persons' houses and every member of the family is looking for the broom. The same is true of a match when the time comes to light the lamp.' That talk," the former student went on, "was the most impressive one that I ever heard. From that talk I have reaped more benefit than from any other. I first started in my room having a place to put everything and putting everything in that place. After getting my room systematized, I began putting this talk in practice at my work, etc."

Every word of the advice that he urged upon his students in a compelling chapel talk at the beginning of the school year in 1913, was a part of his own practice. "I suspect that each of

your parents," he said, "would like to know that you are learning to read your Bible; not only to read it because you have to, but to read it every day of the year because you have learned to love the Bible; because you have learned day by day to make its teachings a part of you. . . Each one of you, in beginning your school year, should have a Bible, and you should make that Bible a part of your school life, a part of your very nature, and always, no matter how busy the day may be, no matter how many mistakes, no matter how many failures you make in other directions, do not fail to find a few minutes to study or read your Bible. The greatest people in the world," he concluded, "those who are most learned; those who bear the burdens and responsibilities of the world, are persons who are not ashamed to let the world know not only that they believe in the Bible, but that they read it."

All these talks to the two thousand students, teachers and their families, as well as townsfolk who crowded in to hear them, were taken down verbatim and published in the school paper, which was subscribed to by large numbers of graduates all over America.

Because of his direct, racy wisdom, salty humor, pungent directness, and shining sincerity, his advice in those talks was always lifted from platitude into stirring and memorable guidance for life.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 8

The degree to which Tuskegee was, at that time, in the vanguard of leadership in "project" education and in the unifying of the student's work into an integrated training for life is suggested in a memorandum upon "Correlation" that Booker Washington circulated to all his teachers. It is given here in full.

Two main groups of effort at correlation of interests are of especial moment to the Academic Department: Correlation (1) of each academic study with every other; and (2) of each academic study with (a) the trades and industries of Tuskegee, and all the social activities of the school community; and (b) the social and industrial environment from which the students come and in which they will probably live and labor.

Each academic study should be correlated, just as far as practicable, with the trades and industries of the school community. Three examples suffice. (1) The teacher of history will stress the progress of inventions and industrial discoveries, the growth particularly of the basic industries, the progress of the working classes. The plow, the saw and jack planes, the printing press, the dynamo—tools and machines of the greatest variety each representing the summation of the mechanical ingenuity of centuries, the students themselves use every day in actual work in the shops and fields. This experience and interest the teacher of history must utilize to develop in his classroom teaching the evolution of selected tools and machines. Farming, poultry raising, cattle raising, saw milling, road building, brickmaking, etc., etc.—these industries, 36 in all, are adequately represented in the school community. In almost every class will be found students actually engaged in these and many other industries.

(2) In English composition it must be remembered that the problem of finding something to write about should be no problem at Tuskegee. The student's experience is full of impressions and ideas and inquiries which the very unusual environment flings at him every moment. Let him talk and write about the things he sees and handles and knows about and is interested in. Let him express his personal experience, the way the things he sees and does actually appeal to him as an individual.

(3) The same principles markedly apply to the teaching of arithmetic. Let the teacher remember that, other things being equal, the real problem—*the problem which the actual conduct of an industrial operation by the student or by his fellows, has presented for solution—is by far the most interesting and helpful.*

A word of caution may be useful at this point. It is essential that the industrial problems brought in by the students be appropriate to the study under consideration and to the stage of progress at-

tained in it by the class; the recitation must not be diverted from its aims and orderly development by haphazard problems. Moreover, the outdoor tour of observation is always in danger of becoming frivolous and ineffective, spectacular and absurd. The teacher should personally go over every detail of the ground in advance, mastering every topic and organizing the topic in his own mind in orderly fashion; he should notify the instructor in charge and the Director of the appropriate department a day or two in advance; he should plan his lesson with the utmost care; and last, though certainly not least, he should secure at the outset of the recitation and maintain to the last the students' close, serious, vigorous attention. The tour of observation is particularly useful in connection with the first, the third, and the fifth of the five formal steps in a complete recitation according to Herbert—preparation, comparison, and application.

The academic studies must be intelligently correlated with the social and industrial environment from which the students come and in which they will probably live and labor.

Some of this environment was suggested in an accompanying table of statistics, also given here in full.

GAINFUL OCCUPATIONS OF HEADS OF HOUSE-  
HOLDS FROM WHICH TUSKEGEE STUDENTS  
(ENROLLED APR. 6, 1906) COME.

	% of total
I. <i>Agricultural Pursuits</i> .....	41.5%
Farmers and planters .....	38.8%
(of these, 76.4% own some part of the land they till)	
Gardeners, Florists, & Nurserymen .....	1.1%
Miscellaneous .....	1.6%
II. <i>Professional Service</i> .....	8.2%
Clergymen .....	2.6%
Teachers .....	2.5%
Government Officials .....	.8%
Miscellaneous .....	2.3%

III. <i>Domestic &amp; Personal Service</i> .....	15.4%
Housekeepers and Stewards .....	3.4%
Laborers (unspecified) .....	3.1%
Cooks .....	2.9%
Trained Nurses .....	1.4%
Servants and waiters .....	1.3%
Barbers .....	1.3%
Launderers and Laundresses .....	1.1%
Miscellaneous .....	.9%
IV. <i>Trade and Transportation</i> .....	12.3%
Merchants and Dealers .....	3.8%
Porters .....	2.1%
Draymen, Hackmen, Teamsters, etc. ....	1.6%
Clerks and Copyists .....	1.1%
Miscellaneous .....	3.7%
V. <i>Manufacturing &amp; Mechanical Pursuits</i> .....	22.6%
Carpenters .....	4.3%
Dressmakers .....	4.0%
Blacksmiths .....	2.4%
Seamstresses .....	1.6%
Masons (brick & stone) .....	1.3%
Miners & Quarrymen .....	1.0%
Machinists .....	.8%
Miscellaneous .....	7.0%

This table, [the memorandum went on] "will repay careful scrutiny. Of fundamental importance are the facts that nearly 42% of the heads of households from which Tuskegee students come are engaged in agricultural pursuits, the next largest percentage being 23 for manufacturing and the mechanical industries; and that of the farmers and planters 76% own some part of the land they till. The teacher must, then, scrupulously utilize every reasonable opportunity to stimulate and refresh and enrich the student's interest in farming and in the opportunities of rural life in the Black Belt. It is hoped that so effective use will be made of these ideas that on leaving Tuskegee many a student from town or city will be impelled to cast his lot in the farming

Black Belt. It is indispensable that every academic teacher become thoroughly familiar by firsthand experience, with the actual life of the Negro people in at least four or five agricultural communities within easy reach of Tuskegee.

B.T.W.

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## CREATING A NEGRO FACULTY

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Hampton and Tuskegee had many parallel characteristics. A fundamental difference between them, which set Booker Washington one of the most challenging of all his baffling tasks, was that, while the Hampton faculty was mainly composed of white men and women from the North, that of Tuskegee was from the very start wholly made up of Negro men and women. Tuskegee was the first outstanding educational institution of which that was true. Armstrong at Hampton had behind him in New England and elsewhere a perfect reservoir of trained white talent, eager to help in educating liberated Negro youth. Washington had behind him a vast stagnant marsh of depressed and despondent illiterate ex-slaves, from which emerged white-collar Negroes educated for the most part for urban tasks in government, business, and professional offices, and in the homes, and railroad cars of the white people. For this reason, with some eminent exceptions, they were not really qualified to take part in the kind of educational work to which Booker Washington at Tuskegee had set his hand.

His reasons for not using the available white leadership were, first, that in the South the attempt to mingle white and colored in one faculty under the direction of a Negro principal would have been impossible; and, second, that he desired to multiply colored leadership to the maximum degree.

Out of many examples of the creative originality and inspiring initiative by which Washington achieved his aim we



may take four or five. His methods in choosing his colleagues appeared at times to be haphazard and unrelated to a defined plan. One instructive example may be found in the story of J. H. Palmer. He graduated from Hampton in 1890, in the same class that was to provide Washington's successor at Tuskegee, Major Robert Russa Moton. He had been, like Booker Washington, janitor in the Academic Building under the redoubtable Miss Mackie. Thence he went to Oberlin College in Ohio and worked in the theological department. When the author asked him why the Principal chose him to work at Tuskegee Mr. Palmer replied:

"I came down to Boston in 1894 and heard that Booker T. Washington was there with his quartette of singers and was going to speak in Arlington Street Church. At the close I went up to him and said, 'Have you any work that I could do? I would like to go South.' He looked me up and down and asked what I had been doing. When I mentioned Miss Mackie at Hampton he said, 'I know her well: come down to my hotel in the morning. I do need someone now for work that you can do.' In the morning he said, 'I want you to go right away down to Tuskegee. I will write to Miss Mackie about you; but go at once and help my brother who is working much too hard. Go down and take the details off his shoulders. He has administrative charge. Help him to look after the individual students; especially the new ones who are poor and destitute. Stand by them and keep them from getting discouraged. Get to know each new one by name; assign him to the shoe-shop, the carpentry or the brickmaking according to what you think are his capacities.' He bought my ticket right through to Chehaw, the station for Tuskegee, trusting his intuition and the name of Miss Mackie.

"He came to have confidence," Palmer continued, "in my judgment on a boy. If some of the faculty said, 'This boy is

too dull and stupid to keep on,' he would ask me, 'Is he industrious in his department?' If he was slovenly there he would check him up but give him a chance of reforming himself. He would call up the student, with me present, and would say to him, 'You are recommended to be expelled from the Institute. What do you say about that?' If the boy showed a desire to do better, the Principal would either say, 'I decide to give you a month's trial; but you mustn't show the Faculty Council that I am wrong'; or, 'I will give you one more chance if the Council agrees to it.' If, after that, the student kept at his evil ways, the Principal would have him put on a wagon, tell the teacher to drive him to the station, buy a ticket to his home town, put him on the train, and telegraph to his parents that he was on the way home. Then he would write a sympathetic note to the parents explaining the situation. It is now forty-four years," Palmer concluded, "since I came to Tuskegee. I worked with Booker Washington for twenty years. It was always team work with him as leader."

No man linked with the life of the Principal and the service of Tuskegee Institute is more worthy of memorial than his elder brother, John, whom he sent Palmer down to assist. John, having graduated from Hampton, entered government service for a time. As the demands of Tuskegee grew, however, the older brother responded to Booker's desire that he should come and help share the burden. He became the Principal's alter ego in many administrative parts of the work during Booker's increasingly long speaking tours in different parts of the United States and Canada. "If Mr. J. H. Washington tells you to do a thing, do it as though I had told you," was the Principal's constant instruction. "John stayed home and kept everything going," said Palmer. "They never had any difference throughout the years. John worked fourteen or fifteen hours a day. We would go at night into every room

in the dormitories with a lantern to see that the boys were all right." "I wore myself out," was John Washington's pathetic admission made to this colleague shortly before he died. "It was," reiterated Palmer, "teamwork that built Tuskegee." And no part of that coöperation calls for more lasting recognition than the shouldering of unrelenting burdens—administrative, secretarial and executive—by the small group at the head of the Institute, like John Washington, Monroe Work, and Emmett Scott, who were entirely content for the Principal to receive the fame so long as the aims they had in common were achieved.

One day, in 1888, a tough, bellicose seventeen-year-old Negro reached the Institute and gave in his name as Jailous Purdue. "I had worked with mechanics. I was a rough wild boy, using bad language and drinking whisky, and I handed the bottle round to other students," he told the author. "I took a knife to stab a teacher at the Institute who called me a liar. Mr. Washington sent for me," Purdue went on, "and told me to go and beg the teacher's pardon. I refused. I said, 'No man can call me a liar and get away with it. I did not lie. I can't beg his pardon.' 'Go away,' said Mr. Washington, 'and come back tomorrow.' I came back. Four times he told me to beg the teacher's pardon. Again and again I refused and gave my reason. 'I usually send boys away from the Institute for ever,' said the Principal to me, 'for doing what you have done.' Still I would not give in, for I had told the truth all through. For some reason that was in his own mind," Purdue concluded, "Booker Washington let me stay on."

We may guess with some confidence at the reasons in Booker Washington's mind. His almost uncanny insight and his sympathy with all twisted, retarded, and under-privileged youth combined to make him realize first, that the boy was telling the truth, and, second, that under that rough-hewn

clumsy exterior lay not only integrity but grit. He knew also the stormy crosscurrents that could torment a youth with Purdue's ancestry. The grandmother was a slave of pure African race; the grandfather was pure American Indian, possibly an owner of that slave girl. Their daughter, half Negro and half Indian, bore a son to a white man, just after Emancipation Day. That son was the youth confronting Booker Washington. Jailous Purdue's two elder brothers had been born in slavery.

Purdue, now sobered and inspired by the confidence put in him by the Principal, labored from that day in the brick-yards with a zest that no Israelite ever put into the labor for Pharaoh. He began to take responsibility in bricklaying and then in joinery and in the construction of barns. A gift was made to the Institute of five thousand dollars to build an adequate home for the Principal. Booker Washington called Purdue, at that time twenty-one years old, and entrusted him with the task of being foreman in the construction of the house, giving him ten students to work under him. "We put forty-five thousand shingles on that house," Purdue said, "and no water has ever leaked into that building." The skill, thoroughness, and all-round efficiency that he showed in handling both the students who did the work and the materials used in the building showed the Principal that his confidence was well-placed.

At last a bigger test came when the Misses Phelps Stokes gave the large amount of money needed for building a worthy Chapel for the Institute, large enough to hold its seventeen hundred to two thousand students. The responsibility of shaping plans for this building was put on the shoulders of Robert Taylor, who had joined the faculty from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Purdue was made foreman for this exceptional enterprise. "There was not a man among

us," he said, with the gay exhilaration of conquest over difficulty, "who had ever handled the construction of a building of that description. We shaped the bricks out of the clay in the fields here. We burned the bricks ourselves. Every one of the two million bricks was laid by a student. We shaped all the timbers; did all the carpentry; put on all the plaster. I made an elevator for the bricks that was worked by a mule. That mule got so wise that he ran the elevator without our having to say a word to him! And the first electric light that ever burned in Macon County, Alabama, we put into this chapel, from a dynamo driven by an engine which was used in the day to drive lathes. Booker Washington trusted us to do it and we got it done. We often reason," Purdue continued, "that we can't do a thing because we haven't done it. He himself did, and called on us to do, what never had been done. He paid no attention to what had not been done elsewhere."

A second example of the creation by Washington of outstanding faculty and race leadership from apparently hopeless raw material is found in the life story of Thomas Monroe Campbell, born in 1883, the second son of an ex-slave Methodist itinerant preacher. The father was honest and truthful but ignorant, and showed no active interest in the education of his many children. He became a widower, married a widow with three children, became a widower again, and was thus left helpless with nine children, all uneducated. Under a perpetual load of irremovable debt, he sank into dejected hand-to-mouth penury, moving from farm to farm. His small son, Tom, naturally drifted into desultory habits, with an apparent incapacity to concentrate on any work, even under the spur of his father's sporadic thrashings with hickory twigs. Tom and his elder brother, Will, whose right foot had been shot off, heard that "a big Negro" had made a wonderful speech at Atlanta to white and colored folk (Tom was twelve

at the time); and that this man, Booker Washington, had a school for poor Negro boys in Alabama, a long way south from their own home in northern Georgia. Will, utterly penniless and handicapped by the loss of one foot, ran away, and, after surviving shocking hardships, at length reached Tuskegee. Later he wrote to his father from there, urging him to send Tom to the Institute, and enclosing money to help with his journey. The father used this money to repay a debt and would not help Tom to reach Tuskegee. The boy therefore also ran away from home to try to reach the Institute. He walked day and night through rain and snow in as bitterly cold a winter as has been recorded in the South. He chopped wood to earn enough to keep him alive, until his fingers froze to the axe handle and could not be straightened for weeks. His feet have never recovered from tramping the wintry roads. At last, reduced almost to a skeleton, he reached Tuskegee. A smallpox epidemic was raging there, followed by typhoid, which killed his brother. Malaria left Tom himself, for the time being, almost a wreck. So close to the border of illiteracy was he that an entrance examination set him so low that he could not be put into any class, even the most elementary. Tom was tried out, however, in the stables with a rake in his hand. On being asked what course he would like to take, he said that at all costs he had had enough of farm work. He chose "agriculture" because the word sounded good—and was disgusted to discover that it was just another name for farming! Put in charge of horses, he found himself driving the Principal of the Institute to and from the distant railway station and developed an ever-deepening hero worship for Booker Washington.

The Principal's application of the techniques of science to transform agriculture and thus lift the Negro to the good life enthralled Tom Campbell. He became lyrical in advocacy

of the efficient plow, the right rotation of seeds in appropriate soil at the best seasons, the economic miracle of paying off mortgages by breeding the best hogs, chickens, and cows; as well as the equally astonishing miracles of health to be worked through rightly dug and boarded latrines, whitewash and soap, open windows, and the balanced diet won by industry and skill from one's own vegetable garden and chicken run. He saw the rural Negro minister as a potential ally to be won over from his prevalent suspicious hostility toward science to co-operation with Tuskegee in its fight against the debt and disease, ignorance and immorality of the Deep South. So it came about that when Booker Washington, in one of the supremely creative initiatives of his life, yoked Tuskegee with the state government in taking the movable school to the Negro farmer, the inevitable choice for its faculty leadership was Thomas Monroe Campbell. So a first-class leader was shaped by Booker Washington's achievement out of an ignorant, callow but eager youth, whose background would, apart from Tuskegee and its founder, have held him in a slough of economic and mental despond to the end of his days.

Two vital points must be held in mind as we look at leaders like Tom Campbell. First, on his arrival at Tuskegee, Campbell would have been rejected as hopeless by every academic test normally applied; but Tuskegee, as created by Booker Washington, knew that a youth who had pressed forward through such a purgatory of suffering and hardship for the sake of education had the making of leadership in him, and therefore gave him his chance. Secondly, in the fight for equality that still lies ahead, the Negroes will achieve victory only in so far as both leaders and rank and file possess the skilled capacity and the disciplined character resulting from such training.

When in 1945 the Christian forces on both sides of the Atlantic wanted to work out a coherent policy for the rural education and all-round development of the African people in concert with the governments of Liberia, Belgium, France, and Britain, Thomas Campbell was chosen with two others and sent on a tour of investigation through Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Belgian Congo, French Equatorial Africa, French Cameroons, Nigeria, the Gold Coast, and British Togoland.<sup>1</sup> The equipment that he possessed for his share of that task came because, at the malleable moment, the Booker Washington blend of down-to-earth realism with adventurous idealism, and of scientific knowledge with habits of industry, called out all those latent qualities in that desperately underprivileged adolescent.

The most famous member of Booker Washington's faculty was, of course, the chemist of creative genius, George Washington Carver. In his case, however, the genius of the man had served its apprenticeship to education before he made any contact with Tuskegee. Born about 1863 of slave parents on a plantation belonging to Moses Carver in Missouri, the boy and his mother were seized by a gang of raiders during the Civil War and carried over the border into Arkansas. The owner sent searchers to hunt for the kidnapped slaves; but, by the time they caught up with the raiders, the mother had disappeared, never to be seen again. Moses Carver ransomed his slave boy in exchange for a race horse valued at three hundred dollars. George almost died of whooping cough and was for years so weak that, after Emancipation, the white planter let him roam the woods instead of making him work

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<sup>1</sup> Their report was published in the United States and Great Britain as *Africa Advancing: A Study in Rural Education in West Africa and the Belgian Congo* (by Thomas M. Campbell, Jackson Davis, and Margaret Wrong. New York: Friendship Press, 1945.)



for a living. Thus he won, as Booker Washington later said, "an intimate, and, I might almost say, personal acquaintance with all plants and flowers." He also showed skill in drawing and painting as well as in knitting and crochet. He made in secret out in the bush a little botanical garden of curious plants. After someone discovered this and recognised his uncanny talent for making difficult plants grow and for protecting them from insects and disease, he acquired the name, "the plant doctor." The boy was also known far and wide among his own people for his beautiful singing.

Carver found employment in greenhouses and also secured a position as church organist. New life began for him when the Iowa State Agricultural College at Ames put him in charge of its greenhouses attached to the horticultural department. Having graduated and become assistant instructor in botany, he followed further studies and won the first postgraduate diploma that the college had ever given. His astonishing gifts of insight and discovery caught the eye of one of his professors, James Wilson, who was Secretary of Agriculture under McKinley, Roosevelt, and Taft. Wilson wrote to Booker Washington, who seized the first opportunity to see George Washington Carver and to invite him to join the faculty at Tuskegee.

A note addressed by the thirty-three-year-old Carver from Ames (April 12, 1896) in answer to a preliminary inquiry from the Principal said: "It has always been the one great ideal of my life to be of the greatest good to the greatest number of 'my people,' and to this end I have been preparing myself for these many years; feeling, as I do, that this line of education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom to our people." In reply to another letter from Washington, a month later, Carver says, "I am looking forward to a very busy, pleasant and profitable time at your college and shall be

glad to co-operate with you in doing all I can through Christ who strengtheneth me to better the condition of our people. It is very kind of you to give me ample time for preparation. . . Providence permitting, I will be there in November."

The spontaneous and frequent expression of Christian feeling and conviction in these letters and in his conversation was not prompted at all by a conventional piety, but sprang from the very roots of Carver's intellectual and intuitive life. In every talk with him, going up and down among the test tubes, specimen bottles, and crucibles of his chemical laboratory, the author found that in his uncounted discoveries and inventions Carver felt that he was only thinking the thoughts of the Eternal Creator, the Supreme Scientist, after Him. He said that he was sure that, by every fresh use he discovered for the sweet potato or the peanut, he was carrying to further lengths his response to the trust committed to man by the Creator when He said, "I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed." One had the strange exaltation of watching one of the scientific geniuses of the twentieth century carrying out his work with the soul of an Isaiah, the motive of the Good Samaritan, and the heart of a little child.

Booker Washington and Carver were as the poles asunder in their natural gifts and acquired skills, but they were of one mind and spirit in the values for which they worked and the dynamic force that drove them forward. Carver stated this common allegiance in a sentence in his letter of acceptance of his post on the faculty at Tuskegee: "I read your stirring address delivered at Chicago. I said 'Amen' to all you said. You have the correct solution of the 'race problem'."

It is therefore strictly accurate to describe as "holy glee" the radiance that one watched on the dark, wrinkled face of the aged scientist as he described how, at the Experiment



AIR VIEW OF TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE



Station that he set up at Tuskegee, he had 266 bushels of sweet potatoes per acre on land sown with his fertilizer as compared with 40 bushels in each acre of unfertilized soil. This "magic," however, as it seemed to the local farmers, was eclipsed when, by continuous intensive experiment, he had evolved a cotton with a longer, finer staple, more prolific and disease resistant, friendly to different soils, and maturing early enough to avoid the boll weevil. Among the more helpfully-destructive forms of scientific help required of Carver by Booker Washington was the preparation of a "bedbug exterminator." "I can make the bedbug exterminator," he replied, "for about 55 cents per gallon. This will result in a saving of a dollar per gallon." After detailing the contents, he humorously concludes: "The chief difference in the exterminator I shall make and the one you are buying is that I leave out the perfumery, which is rather costly; but as far as killing the bugs is concerned, it will kill them just as well!"

The sensitiveness of Carver to beauty and his mastery of botany enabled him to give the Principal valued help in inspiring the students to keep the table decorations varied and attractive. In one memorandum he detailed sixteen kinds of decorative plants that could be found at that time of year—mid-December—in the fields, woods, and swamps. A further memorandum addressed to the Principal in January 1915 gives a scientific, economic, and lyrical appraisal of the actual and potential contribution of the greenhouses of the Institute to the beauty of the campus, the Chapel, the reception halls, and the grounds, to which over ten thousand bedding plants were contributed each year. "It would be difficult," he wrote, "to tell the amount of good that students get in the way of refinement from the excellent floral decorations seen so often in the Chapel, classrooms and various buildings. . . . The boys and girls at work among these plants, studying how to care for them, always make an inspiring scene."

Carver plunged with zest into coöperation with the Movable School program, electrified Farmers' Conferences with the practicality of his wonder-working methods, and wrote pamphlets for the Negro farmer and his wife on "How to grow the Peanut and 105 ways of preparing it for Human Consumption" and "How the farmer can save his sweet potatoes and ways of preparing them for the table."

Fourteen years after Carver's appointment Booker Washington greatly enlarged the scope of his colleague's responsibility and authority, as noted in a memorandum sent to all heads of departments in November, 1910. Nothing could thrill Washington with deeper satisfaction than to see the economic status of the southern farmer, Negro and white, potentially advanced by Carver's brilliant genius, not only in stimulating vastly more productive crops but by his chemical wizardry in extracting from the peanut and the sweet potato some four hundred products ranging from flours and starch to dyes, synthetic rubber, paper, oils, ink, and pharmaceutical preparations. He showed how to make marble, building boards, wood veneers and fibres from waste products; while the mind is staggered by the limitless possibilities that he has unfolded for the uses of the inexhaustible resources of clay that lie beneath the surface of the South.

Carver's loyalty to Tuskegee withstood approaches such as, among others, to consider, in 1913, the directorship of two United States Government experiment stations after the Tuskegee model, and a handsome offer, which would have brought much greater pecuniary reward, to join Edison in his laboratory at West Orange. This loyalty is all the more notable in that in 1914 Carver felt driven to remind the Principal that he was working for the same salary that he had received in 1896, that in that period he had taken only one vacation of ten days, and that, as he put it, "I have worked

with the hope and feeling that, when my head begins to silver over as it is now, I could have a home." He warned Booker Washington that this might "force me to seek a place where I can have some assurance of being cared for when I reach the point where I am not so vigorous as I am now. I am sure you will not blame me for this." This incident seems to add another example of the defects inherent in the dominance of one controlling mind in an institution that had grown beyond the capacity of such personal direction to deal justly with all its members.

Nothing could be more characteristic, however, of the general relations between the two men than a note to the Principal from Carver on May 25, 1915, only a few months before Washington's death, thanking him for securing a substantial gift from Mr. Rosenwald and expressing his satisfaction at being thought "worthy of such a high testimonial." "It encourages me," Carver concludes, "to work if possible still harder to leave a genuine contribution to the race through Tuskegee. No individual has any right to come into the world and go out of it without leaving behind him distinct and legitimate reasons for having passed through it."

A touch of irony attends the fact that one of the most influential men called by Booker Washington to join the staff at Tuskegee was a graduate of Howard University, with no training in agriculture or handicrafts. This was Emmett J. Scott, distinguished journalist, public relations officer, and confidential secretarial adviser. For some eighteen years he was the most intimate of all the Principal's associates. At the time when Washington delivered his epochal Atlanta speech in 1895, Scott was editor of a Negro newspaper in Houston, Texas. Little suspecting what would be the outcome he wrote an editorial in which he stated:

Without resort to exaggeration, it is but simple justice to call the

address great. It was great! Great in that it exhibited the speaker's qualities of head and heart; great in that he could and did discriminately recognise conditions as they affect his people, and greater still in the absolute modesty, self-respect and dignity with which he presented a platform upon which, as Clark Howell of the *Atlanta Constitution*, says, "both races, blacks and whites, can stand with full justice to each."

In that editorial Scott showed Washington that he was in wholehearted accord with his policy and program. Inquiry disclosed that Scott had a disciplined mind, was able in self-expression, discriminating, and familiar with the larger world that was foreign to the vast majority even of the educated members of that generation of colored men and women, as well as being a skilled, experienced journalist. In the year following the Atlanta speech, therefore, at the same time that he was recruiting George Washington Carver, Booker Washington invited Emmett Scott to come to Tuskegee. The aftermath of the speech, in making Washington a national leader and in winning support for his work from the white men in the North as well as in the South, had on the one hand developed an ever-increasing volume of correspondence, and, on the other, had necessitated more journeys by the Principal away from Tuskegee, in order to stimulate by speeches and in interviews much larger financial support for the Institute. When Tuskegee was in full swing we are told that, on an average, between 125 and 150 letters reached the Principal every day and any number from 500 to 1000 went out. Emmett Scott came to help Washington grapple with these complex demands by handling the correspondence, dealing with the press all over America and finally throughout the world, and by keeping his finger on the pulse of inter-racial feeling through a wide network of trusted confidential correspondents in most of the centers of America where the races were in contact. He was soon made secretary to the



Institute as well as personal or confidential secretary to the Principal.

Obviously the performance of such functions as these would make demands which, at that time, no graduate of Hampton or Tuskegee or of an agricultural college like Ames would be equipped to meet. Booker Washington's shrewd realism led him to recognise that a man of predominantly intellectual or cultural training, with practical experience in journalism and public affairs and with executive ability, was called for to help him to grapple with the fresh demands now crowding in upon him. Between them the two men evolved a pattern of action that proved its effectiveness.

When the Principal was in residence at Tuskegee, by the time he had taken his morning ride, paid his visits to the dining rooms and kitchens and had his breakfast, Emmett Scott had opened the mail and sorted it into an agreed order. The categories were, roughly, four: first, those letters which could be handed out to different heads of departments for handling; second, those to which Scott himself could dictate replies for the Principal to sign; third, those asking for information which the recently created Research Department could either provide or acquire; and, fourth, those few to which Washington himself must dictate personal replies. When the Principal was absent from Tuskegee on speaking tours, as he was for ever-increasing periods, the decisions fell more and more upon Emmett Scott's shoulders. The Principal's insistence upon being kept daily in the closest contact with the affairs of the Institute itself created further correspondence, not only for Scott but for other staff-members like Palmer, who had to report on every new student who arrived or old one who left, as well as on any emergency student problem, while Logan, the treasurer, reported on the financial barometer, and so on.

Another constantly increasing aspect of Scott's relationship with the Principal sprang from the growing complexity of Booker Washington's public relations, and especially those linked with his governmental contacts. Emmett Scott's wide knowledge of and sensitiveness to the increase and diminution of tensions in race relations was of untold value. At times, when the Principal was involved in delicate negotiations with government or other groups for the betterment of conditions for the Negro, Scott would sit behind Washington's chair and scribble occasional notes of advice, to grasp which the Principal's receptive hand would drop behind unseen. A number of memoranda, also, show that Booker Washington looked to Scott for detailed suggestions with regard to the subjects to be dealt with in making his annual report. Much of Scott's unexcelled knowledge of Washington during this period has been distilled in his book, which gives insight into the development from the initiation of Tuskegee to the Principal's death: *Booker T. Washington: Builder of a Civilization*, written with Lyman Beecher Stowe.

Increasing responsibilities in these years fell upon one of the ablest and most self-effacing of all Washington's colleagues, the late Monroe N. Work. The background of his life is significant of a largely forgotten element in the costly ambition of the Negro slaves to secure freedom. His grandfather, Henry Work, as a slave, managed to gain his own freedom. Leaving his slave wife and many children, he traveled into "free" territory, bought a farm and made enough money to buy the freedom, first, of his wife, and, then, one by one, of ten of his children. Each child, as he was freed, joined his parents on the farm at Decatur, Michigan, to earn more money to buy the freedom of his brothers and sisters. When Henry Work died, three of his children were still unredeemed in slavery. Monroe Work told Booker

Washington that he had no idea how much money his grandfather and family thus raised in all to purchase their relatives from slaveowners, but that his own father alone was bought for fourteen hundred dollars.

Monroe Work entered Tuskegee Institute to create the highly efficient and courteous Records and Research Department. The need for such a department was first felt when the Principal, after the Atlanta speech, became increasingly recognized as the leading citizen of his race in the world. Inquiries poured on to his desk from both sides of the Atlantic, from Africa as well as from Europe, about the Negro and his problems and progress; his health, his economic and legal status; his political rights with regard to voting, the productivity of his farms, the rise or fall of persecution and lynching, and many other matters. Long periods spent by the author in that Research Department at Tuskegee during successive years have created clear certainty as to the high value of the scrupulously exact, unobtrusive, and sustained service rendered up to his death in 1945 by Monroe Work, and by his colleagues since then.

Newcomers on the faculty were often staggered and even chilled by Booker Washington's apparently casual way of leaving them to struggle with the creation of a new department. Two examples may suffice to illustrate this.

George Washington Carver, on arriving at Tuskegee in October 1896 to teach agricultural science, found himself with one spare room to teach in, only thirteen students electing his course, no laboratory, no financial provision for equipment, and twenty acres of soil that had been so drained of life-giving qualities for long years that, even when Booker Washington begged some fertilizer for Carver to use on it, it still refused to grow a paying crop.

"Your laboratory has to be in your head," the intrepid

thirty-three-year old agricultural chemist said to his startled students. Retrieving china jars, saucepan handles, and old flatirons, with odds and ends of wire and rubber, from Tuskegee town dump heaps, and discovering richly-productive nourishment for cabbages, melons and onions in swamps and the Institute dump, he set his students to strengthening the soil and analyzing its constituents. By struggling through difficulties instead of relying on expensive equipment, they were fitted to grapple with formidable obstacles when they returned, as graduates, to remote farms. Washington did not, however, leave his colleague without equipment. In the year of the appointment of Carver, the Principal persuaded the state legislature to finance the Tuskegee Agricultural Experimental Station.

A second example of Washington's apparent casualness in setting a new member of the faculty to work happened when Emmett Scott arrived at Tuskegee on a Sunday morning in September, 1897. The Principal greeted his new colleague in a matter-of-fact way which Scott confessed to himself was disappointing, but asked him to sit on the platform with him while he led the service of worship "in a deeply reverent way."

The next day [Dr. Scott tells us] I reported at his office. He began to advise me of what he would expect, and then pushed toward me a huge pile of diversified correspondence, and remarked most casually, without even going over it with me, 'I wish you would dispose of these letters as rapidly as possible,' and walked from the office. I was aghast. I had never up to that time dictated a letter. Two stenographers sat quietly by waiting for me to begin the day's work—measuring me, studying me, I felt. I had to make a beginning, so I did. . . . In the afternoon, with beating heart and much trepidation of spirit, I passed the correspondence to him for review and signature. Promptly he signed that sheaf of letters, reserving only two of them . . . for re-dictation.

Emmett Scott says that later he

came to recognize his action in my case as a distinguishing characteristic. Having chosen an assistant for a given task, he trusted him; put him or her upon their own resources, and held them to strict accountability without needless nagging or interference. Once he had selected members of his staff for trusted posts, he gave them his complete trust and confidence.<sup>2</sup>

Only a few men have been introduced to the reader in this chapter on Booker Washington as the builder of the first wholly colored teaching staff of a great educational institution. Their characteristic diversity of type, origin, and equipment, however, illustrates the flexibility of his method and the variety of capacities that he recruited to gather round him an ever-increasing and loyal team of men and women. Starting in 1881 with only himself and Olivia Davidson, at the time of his death his staff numbered a hundred and ninety-seven. In the early days he chose them largely from among the graduates of Hampton. In 1884 out of a staff of fourteen, ten came from that institution. As the years went on, however, Tuskegee trained new members of the faculty, such as Jailous Purdue and Tom Campbell. And, as the need for more outstanding academic equipment became necessary, he turned to institutions like Howard University for Emmett Scott, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for Robert Taylor, and to Ames College for George Washington Carver. The strength of their loyalty to him and to the Institute, as well as their fitness for sustained work in it are suggested by the length of their service. For example, Warren Logan, who came from Hampton in 1883, served, chiefly as treasurer, for nearly half a century; the Principal's foster brother, James B. Washington, was postmaster for forty-one years; Robert

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<sup>2</sup> Founder's Day Address. *The Tuskegee Messenger*, March-April, 1936.

R. Taylor remained as vice-principal and architect of many buildings for thirty-seven years; George Washington Carver died after thirty-five years' service; and John W. Whittaker held his post as chaplain and field agent for thirty years.

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HUMAN RELATIONS ON THE CAMPUS

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Part of the rich gleanings from the archives in the Records and Research Department at Tuskegee has been the multitude of little notes sent by the Principal to his faculty with regard to tiny details as well as to general policy, and memoranda sent in return to him. A few examples reveal his tireless—and to many of his colleagues certainly occasionally tiresome—intervention.

A note from Washington in October 1909 reminds the staff member responsible for guest rooms that

In the first place, there were no flowers in the room. Second. There is no writing material, neither pen, ink nor paper. 3rd. There is not a single book of any kind in the room. Every guest chamber ought to have in it three or four volumes containing both light reading and some kind of religious reading. 4th. There is a pin cushion on the bureau but not a single pin in it. These are only a few of the things that ought to be improved, and I hope they will be done in connection with our guest chambers in the future.

The perusal of a pile of these notes leaves an almost terrifying sense of omnipresence. Reflection upon them, however, shows that their perpetual challenge to his swiftly growing staff has in it no touch of faultfinding. It is informed by two steady concerns. The first is that every student who wills to work may have all the essential aids towards a disciplined skilled character. The second, as instanced in the criticism with regard to the guest rooms, is that the fame of Tuskegee

should be unsullied by any just criticism or disparagement.

The Dean of Women is told that, in the Principal's opinion, it is a mistake to keep locked, except during certain hours of the day, the sinks where the girls get water. "The girls should have free and unhindered access to plenty of cold and warm water at all hours of the day. This is what we have been striving at for a number of years. . . . If some of the girls make a wrong use of the sinks these girls should be punished, but it is a mistaken policy to inconvenience the majority of the girls in order to see that a few do not do wrong."

Four days later we find a long wise letter from the Principal, who has by this time reached New York, dealing with the same Dean's wish to resign on account of friction between herself and both teachers and students under her direction.

I think that as a rule you take matters too seriously. You keep yourself keyed up to too high a nervous tension. . . . In dealing with untrained young people there is a lot of opposing and of negative work. . . . Leave aside many of the little details that now take your time and strength, and give yourself a number of hours each day for careful constructive work. You ought to have several hours each day that you could give in an undisturbed manner in talking with teachers and students in getting hold of their views and wishes. . . . Merely telling students what they can and cannot do I think can be given to somebody else, leaving you free for the larger and more important work of devising and constructing plans for the higher development of the girls. Suppose you let the whole matter stand over until I return to Tuskegee.

This wise counsel to one who was neglecting her opportunity to be a counsellor is of a piece with the fatherly rather than the official relationship that he always tried to sustain.

We have some sympathy both with this harassed Dean and her Principal when, some months after she had withdrawn her threatened resignation, she submits the "names of young women guilty of such dishonourable acts as (1) wear-



ing other persons' clothing and shoes without permission; (2) having the school's hymn books, bed linen and soap in their trunks; (3) going to the trunks of others without permission; (4) bringing food from the dining hall; (5) appropriating goods purchased by matrons for other girls; (6) keeping 'lost' articles after they were advertised lost; (7) taking food and flowers from teachers' rooms; (8) having key of teacher's room secreted in her trunk; (9) having exact sums of money lost by others without being able to account for the source." The Principal's wary comment at the foot of this note is, "Referred to the Committee on Warnings and Demerits." His effort to protect the Dean of Women is illustrated in one of the few really stern notes in which he upbraids an instructor because she indulges in "useless and hurtful gossip concerning officers of the school, and especially that you have criticized adversely and unnecessarily the actions of the Dean of the Women's Department under whom your work immediately falls."

A note from the same Dean complaining that "the present uniform suit for young women is very greatly criticized and is unsatisfactory in many respects" is dealt with by the appointment of a committee composed of the Dean, Mrs. Washington, and one man to plan a new uniform.

Notes on larger issues deal with complete impartiality with his own family. "Mr. J. H. Washington, General Superintendent of Industries" is told that "it is necessary that your department get a stronger hold on matters and that there be a closer gearing up. Your department should be so organized that you could keep constantly up with every order till the job is fully and satisfactorily completed." He then details a case where water pipes were ordered months earlier so that cattle could have access to water in certain fields. "We have gone through all the motions of expending money without

getting results. . . Report the parties to me that are the cause of delay."

Among the multitude of notes to members of the faculty, classified as "local correspondence," are a considerable number addressed in the most impersonal way to "Mrs. Washington" as to any other member of the teaching or administrative staff. We may select a few, all addressed to his third wife, to illustrate his close attention to detail. One, in March 1912, says, "I wish at the beginning of spring you would see that there is put into the girls' course a theoretical and practical course in fruit canning and preserving, to include berries, vegetables and fruits. . . . I do not know how many weeks the course ought to carry but it is highly important that it be put in at once." A rather peremptory note in January 1911 reads: "Mrs. Washington. Hereafter when any machines get out of order please report the matter to Mr. J. H. Washington as speedily as possible. It is quite a loss to have six sewing machines not in condition to be used." Again, in the following month we find, "The yard of the Practice Cottage does not present a model appearance by any means. So far as I can see there is not a sign of a flower or anything like a flower or shrub in the yard." One may wonder whether or not this is the note to which an answer came, found undated in the file and signed by Mrs. Washington, which simply reads: "Umph! Umph!! Umph!!!"

A vigorous, even exasperated, long note to Mrs. Washington in the same month complains that no outdoor work in growing vegetables, berries, fruit, poultry raising, etc. has been organized, declares that "we are fifteen years behind what we should be," says, "I wish this whole policy overhauled," and asks for a plan to be worked out. He offers Dr. Washington Carver as instructor, "unless a woman can be found to undertake it." One wonders who had suddenly chal-

lenged him in this matter, and whether the criticism that he made, if justified, did not really come back upon himself, if the institution was, indeed, "fifteen years behind the times."

One more example may be given to show how his judgments were at times rightly and successfully resisted by his wife: "Mrs. Washington. I am convinced that we are not justified in using that large room called the 'Child Nurture Room' for such a purpose. The room should either be divided or the partitions rearranged so that we will not have such a large room standing idle the greater part of the time. Anybody would criticize us for such a waste of room. I hope very much you will let me know soon what you think ought to be done." That hope was quickly fulfilled: "Mr. Washington. The Child Nurture Room is in constant use. I should be very sorry to have it divided. Miss Smith uses it for the making of mattresses and it is very necessary to have some sort of room for this kind of work. I consider it dangerous to the health of these girls to work in small rooms. You happened to visit the room when it was not in use. That is not often the case. I will consider it a very great favor if you leave the room as it is. Very truly yours. Mrs. Washington."

As one reviews this spate of notes that descended on all the members of the faculty, not infrequently on the basis, as above, of a single short visit, it is easy to see how maddening some of them must have been. The net result, however, of this insistence on bringing every detail of the vast and intricate organization up to the highest point of efficiency was a perpetual challenge. It was a constant element in his incessant warfare against dirty disorder and shiftlessness in defense of the ordered beauty of disciplined manhood and womanhood. "Officially he was a stern and exacting taskmaster," a Tuskegee teacher told the author. "A tireless worker himself, he imposed heavy burdens on others. From

his home, however, he had a genius for cheering by little kindnesses and by a thoughtful word. Now he would send round a basket of vegetables from his garden; now a cut of one of his own pigs, in which he took great delight."

The fact that the notes of criticism and suggestion descended upon his wife and his brother as readily as upon others freed him from any charge of favoritism. We find his brother challenged in a note because the thresher, the hay-reaper, a boiler, and other machinery are exposed to the sun and the rain. The reply comes back that a shed was ordered for these things three weeks earlier but has not been put up. The question is then passed on to the department responsible, and receives the reply that "if the head of that department had the workers and the team of horses that he used to control he could have done the work."

One matter that must have exhausted even Booker Washington's resource is found in a complex of "local correspondence" in which the Dean of Women complains to the Principal in 1913 that "Lottie Williams manifests a defiant attitude. I am submitting a note received from her. She has refused to do what I told her to do. I do not think that she should be allowed to wear that mass of shabby false hair that she is wearing. . . . She should be required to comply with my request." The letter from Lottie to the Dean reads: "You told me to take off my hair. . .but I cannot fix mine without it, and I went to see Mrs. Washington about it and she says that she did not find any fault of it just so I did not wear too much of it. So I don't think you should care as long as I keep it dressed and fixed neat". Not unnaturally, this brought an indignant note from the Dean of Women to Mrs. Washington: "There are some girls here in this Institution who feel that, as long as they are supported by you, they can ignore me all that they wish and repeatedly I have thrust into my

face by impudent young girls this expression, 'I am going to see Mrs. Washington about it.' I do not feel that I can have any influence with these girls unless they feel that you and Mr. Washington are supporting me; and, in case you do not agree with me, I do not think that the students should be allowed to know that you do not do so." All the light we get on his response to this disturbance of harmony is a laconic word scribbled at the top of the Dean's note to the Principal: "Come in. This girl is here." Evidently personal confrontation in his presence was the method of settlement; but we do not know what happened to her hair!

A note sent to every member of the faculty a few months before his death shows the unflagging zest of Booker Washington for the simple hearty comradeship of the open air in the company of his fellow workers: "The Principal invites you to a corn-roasting and melon-cutting fete in the Agricultural Park, rear of Agricultural Building, tonight from 8 to 9:30 o'clock." More serious faculty meetings were held every month. No agenda was fixed by the Principal. Every member of the faculty was invited to bring forward what was on his mind, whether a new project or an old grievance. The Principal constantly tried to give his staff the consciousness, as one of them put it in conversation, that "No matter how humble the worker might be, he felt that he was helping to run the institution."

Sometimes complaints made by students led Booker Washington to challenge all his faculty. He addressed a note to the head of each department, for instance, in 1913, which reads:

I am certainly being impressed with the fact that in too many cases instructors are not patient enough with students, that is, do not take enough time to hear what students have to say. Students are constantly complaining that teachers will not listen to

them often when they want to make an explanation in a respectful manner. I hope, if in your department there is any such difficulty, it will disappear and all students will be granted a patient sympathetic hearing.

You would expect a man to be no hero to his barber. Charles O. Driver, the campus barber, however, was lyrical in the Principal's praise and illuminating as to Booker Washington's way of life. "I had to wait on him in his home at 11:45 every morning," he said. "I carried the *Montgomery Advertiser* up to him from the town. He would go through that paper and in five minutes had got more out of it than I would get in a week. He read the *Atlanta Constitution* too. He was so eager to get to his work that I couldn't get him to stay in his chair for more than five minutes. After I had shaved him he often went right out to watch the students march from the drill ground at midday into chapel. He was the kindest man I ever met in my life," continued Driver. "I never saw any man who stood as he did for right in every sense for everybody. He had no respect of persons. He taught us all the value of friendly relations with persons right around. In every room in his house was a Bible. If he was sitting down when you walked in, you at almost any time would see him reading it. He talked the most intimate business with men in my presence. He would bring in the trustees from their meeting and make them be shaved first and talk with them. He never warned me not to talk about things—he knew that he could trust me—that I would hold the confidences. There was something about him—I can't analyse it—something fascinating, that I never saw in any other man."

This important matter with regard to the Bible sprang up repeatedly from many interviews. Mrs. Martin, for instance, the housemother of Dorothy Hall, stated that his reason for

having a Bible placed in every room in his house was that wherever he was, if he had a few minutes' respite, he could sit down and read it.

The essential kindness emphasized by the barber was pointed up still further by Jailous Purdue, the expert builder, who, having come to Tuskegee at the age of seventeen, was with Booker Washington for twenty-eight years until his death. "He had the most sympathy," Purdue said, "with the neglected people—those farthest down, and was never too busy to give them help. He always drove it home that the strong should be responsible for the weak. He would never turn a student away because he was ignorant through having been neglected in early life. If he really wanted to begin Mr. Washington would take him in. He had more to discourage him here than any man could be expected to bear, but he never despaired. I have been in that dining room," he continued, "in the early days when we all had no food at all and no money. We would leave the dining room and go back to work on the understanding that when some food came the matron would ring the bell. 'If we do good honest work and live a good clean life we shall get all the money we need,' he would say."

"Booker Washington believed," Purdue went on, "that you had education if you really learned to do one thing well, and that that was within the power of anyone who willed to achieve it. He held that, whether a woman had to do the work in her home or not, every one of them ought to know how to cook, do the laundry, make clothes, know how to arrange rooms, control their heat and ventilation, and, for that reason, be able to read the plans of a house before it was built. By working on that solid basis and taking charge of the whole life of the student we in Tuskegee can bring in a youth from tropical Africa or from a Deep South

plantation and send him on to Yale or Harvard. He insisted on the same standard for his faculty as for his students. I came here in early life, was taught to have a definite program, to save, to pay all debts, not to depend on charity, to be independent, sober, and to behave well toward women. If any man on this faculty didn't treat his wife well or pay his debts or gambled or got drunk he was struck off the Tuskegee pay roll."

Washington's reluctance to be stern, his gentleness toward the feelings of others, and his readiness to recognise positive repentance, combined with his inflexible insistence where the welfare of the work was at stake, are all illustrated in a three-page note, written in May 1914, to a leading member of the faculty, in which he takes up the man's "seeming inability to respect authority and to obey orders unless they are according to your own feeling." He reminds him, first, that it has been necessary to deal with this weakness repeatedly; and, second, that

it is impossible to carry on successfully a large organization such as we have at Tuskegee without every person being willing to obey orders when given without hesitation and sympathetically and promptly. It is the policy of the school, to give just as few orders as possible, and to leave each head of department free to carry out his own plans and his own wishes just as far as possible; but there do come times when orders must be given and must be obeyed. Your failure to respect authority and obey orders undermines and counter-balances in a very effective manner much of your good work. . . . Those under you in your department are fast catching your spirit and they are reflecting your disposition in many ways. I think you will agree with me that we ought to consider very carefully whether the time has not come when it would be better for you and the school for you to seek a place where you will be more free to carry out your own wishes. . . . I do not want to take any action that will in any way inconvenience you or suddenly upset you. You have bought property



at Tuskegee. You have taken deep interest not only in the work of the school but in the building up of the community around the school and all this makes the action which I am now contemplating, unless there is a great change promised for the future, all the more regrettable; but I have no choice left.

From the point of view of a later period this method of personal direct handling of detailed problems by the head of a great complex institution savors of an outworn paternalism wielding patriarchal authority. That criticism must be qualified by two considerations. First, the Institute had developed by continuous growth from a seedling which, as it thrived, thrust out new branches until it became a massive tree. In the early stages, personal handling by the Principal was inevitable, and was, indeed, the outstanding cause of the phenomenal expansion. The point at which full delegation of powers to others is called for cannot easily be assessed; least of all by the man whose creative initiative and control have achieved the growth. The second consideration is that, large as Tuskegee had become, it was nevertheless at that time filled with young men and women from primitive backgrounds to whom impersonal regulations were meaningless but who responded with alacrity to personal direction from a revered leader. As one of them remarked, "His word came to be law with no effort of his own."

As we watch Booker T. Washington in this way through the eyes of his students and his faculty as they came into relationship with him, the true quality of his greatness is thrown into ever clearer relief. He was great. He was in the truest sense great. We see this, not simply in the titanic achievement of Tuskegee Institute, nor in the world-wide fame that he achieved, but most of all in the quality and creative effect of his personal relationships with the young. The aim and influence of the Superman is to make other men

—even other great men—small. The aim and influence of Booker Washington made small men great. He helped the young envenomed Purdues and the frustrated Tom Campbells to cleanse and to free their inner powers that had been dammed up by evil circumstance. When we look for the secret of that kind of greatness we find it again in contrast with the Superman. From Nietzsche onward, the hallmark of the Superman has been contempt for the personality of others. Booker Washington's greatness lay in reverence for the personality of the most ragged, illiterate lout. He held this view not because of a vague sentimentalism, but because he saw the germ of life hidden within the rough husk and longed to help it to break through in bud and flower and fruit. And the wellspring of his reverence for personality lay in his constant renewal of it in his daily reading of the Book which, on its first page, says that the Eternal Creator breathed the breath of life into man so that he became "a living soul," and on its last page envisages the triumph of His Son who said, "it is not the will of your Father. . .that one of these little ones should perish." Washington, as he looked into the faces of those uncouth, coltish lads who came shambling in from the backwoods, saw himself—dirty, ragged, and unkempt at the age of seventeen, aching with the desire to get into Hampton.

A still more stringent test of his faith came when, as we shall now see, he waded into the very Slough of Despond from which those boys were struggling to be freed.

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TOWARD THE SECOND EMANCIPATION

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As young Principal Booker Washington during the 1880's urged his gray horse along the Alabama dirt tracks beyond the steadily widening borders of the Tuskegee Institute land, his gorge rose at the sight of the rickety wooden cabins of the Negro cultivators. Broken windows were stuffed with dirty sacking; unkempt gardens malodorous with garbage were feebly protected by broken fences; a gate drunkenly lurched on one hinge; and a few scrawny chickens were chased in and out of the huts by ragged verminous children. Inside the huts tubercular youths spat infection on the accumulated filth of the mud floor.

The anguish inflicted upon Booker Washington by this squalor and lethargy stands revealed in letters to friends, notes to colleagues, and in many of his speeches to his own people. Incessantly he sought to discover and express challenges that could inspire the colored folk—at that date only one remove from slavery—to lift themselves out of this squalid shiftlessness, and brace them to take the uphill trail toward the clean, healthy life of a self-respecting, prosperous peasant people.

Every reforming educator of the Negro at that time stood baffled by this inert multitude of poverty-stricken folk. Obviously no institution could take in more than a fraction of the boys and girls for the necessary training in agriculture, house construction, or home management. And, just as clearly, no hut-to-hut visitation by teachers could spur and

discipline the bodies and minds of those illiterate unfortunates lost between the world of slavery and that of ordered freedom, "powerless to be born." Washington's picturesque invective scorched the "Negro who is putting on a tuxedo before he has any underwear," or who "plants chrysanthemums in his front yard while his back yard is a morass of filth." The would-be reformer faced the additional obstacle that, at that time, the majority of southern white men were convinced that every effort to move the Negro to a higher plane was doomed to failure.

Washington saw that the Negro was still enslaved by an evil economic system. The mass of black cultivators either struggled unsuccessfully to pay the rent for the plots of land in produce rather than in cash, or gave up in despair. While waiting, as the phrase goes, "till the crop is made," they looked to the white landowners for scanty advances of food and clothing. The majority were tied to the plantation by debt, and made hopeless by the apparently inescapable burden. The darkness was deepened by the fact that, during the decades after Washington went to Tuskegee in 1881, the railroad boom to the western prairies had catastrophically lowered the prices of foodstuffs in the agricultural South. In this dilemma the South fell back on the two crops of which it had then a virtual monopoly, owing to its climate and its soil: tobacco and cotton. But these drastically reduced the cultivation of varied subsistence food crops—the grain, vegetables and fruits needed for food—as well as the livestock dependent on such foodstuffs. Rickets in children, lethargy in all, were direct results of that economy.

Moral chaos deepened the shadows in the picture. The slave system had destroyed the closely-knit family ties and discipline of tribal Africa. Therefore the Negroes in those areas were at that time largely careless with regard to the

chastity of young girls and the responsibility of a father toward his offspring. Many unmarried girls became mothers at an early age. The girl-mother's baby became part of her mother's family group. The father, even if his identity were known, often felt no obligation to marry the girl or to provide for the child. The baby's illiterate grandmother, therefore, was often its only economic buttress. She, in the struggle to live, naturally bent her children and grandchildren to the unskilled toil of the plantation.

Washington saw that, wherever the Negro peasant owned his own land and its little homestead, the family was born again. Better housing and variety of food from subsistence crops and from hogs increased physical stamina and moral self-respect. Ambition for better education sprang up so that the new generation could learn more about agriculture and stand its ground in dealings with the white man. He was sure, therefore, that if the first emancipation had been needed to make the Negro free in the eyes of the law, a second emancipation was needed to make him free in the world of subsistence and citizenship and to develop his self-respect. No Presidential declaration could effect that freedom from want and debt, from economic serfdom. He decided to fight the sharecropper system by stirring the Negro to achieve actual ownership of the soil and of his own home on that soil. In the northern states such a project would have been almost impossible. In the South, however, with scores of millions of acres of alluvial soil available at one-tenth to one-third of the cost of similar lands in the North, and with a climate that makes possible three crops a year, Booker Washington could see a vista of hope. His close and realistic study of priorities made him inflexibly determined to set this solid economic advance on the soil in the first place. "A landless race is like a ship without a rudder," he exclaimed. In his

strategy the first step was for the Negro to get land, to live on its produce and the sale of its crops, and to build his own house on it. Without that firm fulcrum he was sure that no lever could achieve the political rights for which he was eager. He would have echoed Walt Whitman's words: ". . . it is in some sense true that a man is not a whole and complete man unless he *owns* a house and the ground it stands on. Men are created owners of the earth. Each was intended to possess his piece of it."

In February 1892, at the end of the first decade in Tuskegee, Booker Washington started what he called an "experience meeting" of Negro farmers, mechanics, school teachers, and ministers. This took firm root as the Tuskegee Negro Conference. Five hundred came to the first gathering. He carried on these conferences for over twenty years with ever-increasing attendances until his death. A motley crowd of farmers sitting round an improvised plank platform in the open air has not the appearance of an influential educational conference. Washington's genius for the common touch, however, and his inflexible insistence on going right down to simple elemental things, achieved this result. His farmers' conferences combined a minimum of oratory with a maximum of give-and-take conversation.

True to his habit of beginning with the people on their own level of interest, he would start the farmers and their wives, sons, and daughters singing their own spirituals. In a very short time the great gathering, humming and nodding and keeping time with their feet, had acquired a sense of unity and of good feeling. He would then call upon a favorite country preacher to pray. Then Washington himself, standing on a wagon or an improvised platform of planks, followed this with racy descriptions of the good and the bad cottages and plots of land that he had seen on recent

trips, often capping the narrative with the personal story of some Negro who had recently made a real start out of shiftless penury toward owning land and a home. His emphasis on the vital importance both for the individual Negro and for the race as a whole of actual ownership of land and buildings was a theme in all these talks.

Then, looking with his smiling face and gleaming eyes across the hundreds of attentive folk, he singled out some farmer who had himself recently made similar progress. Getting him up on the platform, Washington plied the man with friendly and humorous questions until, with unconscious unpremeditated eloquence, the man was pouring out his experience in practical terms which fired a large number of those in the audience with determination to go and do likewise.

Washington was never tired of emphasizing the power of the pig to wipe out mortgages and to lay foundations for prosperity. At one of his Farmers' Conferences he was waxing eloquent on this theme when an old Negro woman rose and said,

"Mr. Washington, you is got befo' you now Sister Nelson o' Tallapoosa County, Alabama. All I has I owes to dis conference and one little puppy dog."

"How's that?" ejaculated the startled Principal.

"I got a little pig for dat little puppy dog, an' I got my prosperity from dat pig!"

The assembly hung on her lips as she told how her puppy grew up and had puppies. A friend who wanted a puppy agreed to exchange a little pig for a puppy.

"I had heard you tell ober heah about pigs so that I thought dis was a good chance to get started. Dat little pig dun bring me in some mo' pigs. I sol' some an' kep' some. I saved to feed de pigs. I supplied most o' my neighbors wid pigs. So

I got a cow. I began to supply my neighbors wid milk. Den I started me a little garden. Den I sol' my neighbors greens an' onions til I dun paid for de lan' an' de house in which I lib. So all I is I owes to dat little puppy dog an' to dis heah conference."

That story, of course, was retailed hundreds of times all over the state, and its practical spur drove many on to action, whereas moral generalizations would have left them cold.

A second example illustrates that building up of a stable family life which Washington held to be the real foundation stone for advance. He called a tall elderly farmer out of the crowd, exhorting him to "Get up and tell us what you have been doing as a farmer."

With his face wreathed in smiles the farmer climbed on the platform and said:

"Doctor, I done 'tended one o' your conferences here 'bout ten years ago. You said dat a man 'aint wuth nuthin' as a citizen 'less he owns his home, a mule and a bank account. I warn't wuth nothin'. So I talked de whole matter over wid de ol' woman. We decided dat we would make a start. Now I's got two bank accounts." And he held up two grimy bank books. "I own two hun'ed acres o' land an' all de land is paid for. I also own two mules, bofe paid for. I also own some other property, an' de ole woman an' me an' de chilluns lives in a good house an' de house paid for. All dis come 'bout from my comin' to dis heah conference."

A preacher would then "testify" about the flourishing "Pig Club" that he was running among his parishioners, prompted by reading Washington's widely influential "open letter" to the Negro entitled, "Pigs and Education; Pigs and Debts." This letter, issued at a time of deep economic depression in the South and when agriculturists were on the edge of panic, was printed and editorially supported in many newspapers,



white and colored, and had a startling influence on morale as well as economics, by giving a concrete constructive plan for sustaining life right down on the soil.

Sometimes he evoked unexpected replies from the farmers that aroused Homeric roars of laughter. For example, an illiterate farmer, in reply to his inquiry, "What about the morals down in your county?" answered, "Bless yo' heart, Massa Washington, we ain't planted any o' dem down in our county!"

With his instinct for dramatic visualization Washington always made a parade a central feature of each Farmers' Conference. Everybody took part in it. Its length ran to a mile. Scores of wagons and floats drawn by oxen, mules, and horses, as well as other livestock, with hundreds of farmers, young and old, with their wives and daughters, joined in the procession.

The Principal would wind up the conference with a vigorous exhortation: "Buy land; if you can't buy a hundred acres, still buy land; buy thirty acres; yes, buy one acre and build a house. The land is all yours for as deep as you can dig right up to heaven. Get land and live on it. Today," he continued, "you go to town with your wagon empty and come back with the wagon full and your pocket empty. You must go to town with your wagon full of your produce and come back with your wagon empty and your pocket full." He normally secured positive pledges from a good number of the farmers to be owners of land and home by that time the following year.

All his colleagues agreed that these heart-to-heart, face-to-face talks with the Negro tillers of the Deep South were, as he himself put it, "the greatest time of my life." He kept in constant touch with them throughout the conference from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon. Then the

mules and oxen were hitched to the wagons. Old and young piled in, and the farmers jogged off home, to talk over the meaning of the day and make plans for putting into practice for themselves the projects they had heard about and the demonstrations they had watched.

Obviously, however, local Farmers' Conferences attracting a few hundred people to Tuskegee would be wholly inadequate as a means of grappling with the wider ranges of the problem of what we have called the second emancipation. Both in geographical range and in economic and cultural complexity, the issues called for a wider extension and a deeper penetration.

In all his contacts with these multitudes of "sheep without a shepherd" Washington always encouraged the growth of the church among the colored people, and the training of an intelligent pastoral leadership. No educational requirements were set at that time for colored preachers; nor were they being trained for their work on any systematic plan. The Deep South was full of untrained, unequipped, undisciplined ministers. A minority of fine leaders was offset by a majority of ignorant, although often sincere, pastors.

Primitive as was the worship in the church and camp services, and startlingly emotional in many of its expressions, the church was at that time for the American Negro the only institution that belonged to him and which he completely controlled. There alone he found full self-expression. Nowhere else could he relax from the omnipresence of the white man and completely forget the phobias that haunted him in the outside world. In the life of the church he felt reassured that he was a child of an almighty Father, who really cared for him. He felt a warm, all-embracing sense of a stable protective Power in a world shot through with insecurity. Booker Washington perpetually fought the tendency of the Negro in

America, shared by all underprivileged or exploited peoples, to escape from the need to strive for better conditions here and now by anticipations of future bliss in another world. He insisted, in his racy way, that the preachers and farmers should combine to develop "soil salvation as well as soul salvation."

Washington's strength was always renewed, like that of the giant Antaeus in the Greek myth, by planting his feet on the ground. He took fresh stimulus and resiliency from every contact with the common folk of his race. The failure of many subsequent Negro leaders to sustain influence over the rank and file of the people can be traced to their lack of the common touch.

One reported short talk to farmers and their families puts his philosophy and practical programme into a nutshell:

Make your own little heaven right here and now. Do it by putting business methods into your farming, by growing things in your garden the year around, by building and keeping attractive and comfortable homes for your children so they will stay at home and not go to the cities, by keeping your bodies and your surroundings clean, by staying in one place, by getting a good teacher and a good preacher, by building a good school and church, by letting your wife be your partner in all you do, by keeping out of debt, and by cultivating friendly relations with your neighbors both white and black.<sup>1</sup>

He was especially wrathful about people who lived on the land but instead of growing vegetables threw away their money on canned food. "We are not living under our own vine and fig tree," he exclaimed, "we are living under tin cans. We are making slop-pails of our stomachs; we are eating foods from which the finest values have disappeared and needlessly wasting money to do so." One of the few resolutions

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<sup>1</sup> Emmett Scott and Lyman B. Stowe, *Booker T. Washington: Builder of a Civilization* (1916), pp. 141-142.

passed by the Farmers' Conference gave the statistics on this issue. It read: "For every dollar's worth of cotton we raise only forty-nine cents' worth of all other crops. 20,000 Negro farms have no cattle of any kind; 270,000 have no hogs; 200,000 no poultry, 140,000 no corn, 550,000 no sweet potatoes and on 200,000 farms no gardens."

At the close of each conference, on the following day, Washington led a smaller, more intimate conference of leaders, or, as he called them, "Workers." Preachers, teachers, local leaders, heads of schools and colleges were included. General problems, illuminated by the dramatized individual experience of the previous day, formed the agenda of these workers' conferences.

Graduates of Tuskegee who were working in other states initiated the Farmers' Conferences there, to Washington's deep satisfaction. For example, one of his graduates, named Carter, of the class of 1893, went from Tuskegee in that year all the way to Kansas, organized a Negro Institute in Topeka and later moved it out into the country to a site of over a hundred acres, on which he erected in the course of a decade six substantial stone buildings. He gathered a faculty, including four still younger graduates of Tuskegee, and interested the white farmers in his aims. He was, thus, one of a number of enthusiastic alumni who went into different parts of the United States and started miniature Tuskegees. Carter went on to hold Farmers' Conferences in the Booker Washington manner.

One quaintly-worded resolution of the conference of 1913, reported to Booker Washington, showed the grip of his principle of land ownership:

We would reiterate our former declaration, that the race continue to buy land in large acreages; if living in the city, purchasing lots or suburban property. The man that owns the land is controlling

the situation. God is not making any more land, and when this is possessed there will be no opportunity for securing more.

The heavy drain on his time and energy involved in long speaking tours in the northern and eastern states to raise money for Tuskegee made it impossible for the Principal to give sustained personal direction to this extension work. His correspondence, however, shows the foresight and strategic planning by which he kept his own personal relationship with it and encouraged the fires to burn in the hearts of farmers.

Here, for example, is a letter to Alonzo G. Chandler, a colored farmer in Alabama (June 4, 1915, written in New England):

When I return from the North, which will be about the middle of June, I want you to remind me to come out and have a meeting with all the farmers and their wives. In the meantime, I am writing to ask you to put before each individual the following matters. In order that you may save time and trouble, I am sending a number of copies, enough for each family and each farmer.

Five short paragraphs follow in which he presses every man to clear his debts as fast as he can, by small or large payments, in money or in crops; to use every hour available in rainy weather or with crops gathered to improve his house and barns; to keep the soil stirred; to raise pigs and fowls in order not to have to buy meat; and for the wives to can or preserve by drying in the sun every possible vegetable and berry. A note soon came back from Chandler to say that he had placed a copy of the letter in every home and that the majority of the farmers and their families were already practising the precepts urged by Washington.

A method by which a large expansion of the Farmers' Education project would be achieved without draining his energy now dawned on Booker Washington's horizon. Soon after

joining the staff at Tuskegee George Washington Carver, inspired by Washington's example, formed the habit of loading some tools and agricultural exhibits into a buggy and setting out for a weekend among farmers. When Booker Washington persuaded the Alabama state legislature in 1896 to pass a law setting up the Tuskegee Agricultural Experiment Station, Carver was made director, and a four-wheeled coach was provided for him and his colleagues in which to travel and assist farmers. Carver always found large numbers of Negroes assembled on Sunday round their church and thus had a ready-made assembly for his demonstrations between services. This expansion was still further developed by Regional Farmers' Conferences organized by churches in different areas.

As this method developed, Booker Washington saw its larger possibilities and appointed a group, headed by Carver, to draw plans for a more efficient demonstration method. Morris K. Jesup, a New York merchant who had become a friend of Tuskegee, was introduced to the idea by the Principal. He gave money for making, equipping, and running several wagons. The first Movable School carried on the Jesup Agricultural Wagon was driven out from the Tuskegee grounds on May 24, 1906, by George Bridgeforth of the Agricultural Department. In November of that year Washington asked Tom Campbell,<sup>2</sup> who had just graduated at Tuskegee, to start a "Farmers' Coöperative Demonstration" as a development of the "Movable School of Agriculture." In talking this over with Campbell the Principal said that he saw two needs. "The farmers who need instruction most are not getting it. And instead of telling the farmer what to do, show him how to do it and he will never forget." "A Farmers' College

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<sup>2</sup> The story of his remarkable career is told more fully in his admirable book, *The Movable School Goes to the Negro Farmer* (Tuskegee Institute Press, 1936).

on Wheels" was his name for the wagon on which he sent Campbell out. In the wagon was a fine cow, two hogs of contrasted types, and—according to the season of the year—either a portable garden with vegetables growing, or an improved type of plow and samples of seeds. An alert white educator, Seaman A. Knapp, of the Federal Government's Department of Agriculture in Texas, was invited by the Principal to come to Tuskegee to watch the Jesup experiment. He conveyed its character and potentialities to the General Education Board, that remarkable child of Booker Washington's initiative. That board, with Wallace Buttrick as its director, in association with the United States Department of Agriculture, agreed to support the College on Wheels. Thomas Monroe Campbell became the Government's first Negro field extension agent.

The General Education Board saw that many rather primitive white farmers were in similar need of practical education by demonstration. Ultimately the Mobile School, which Booker Washington had conceived and initiated, covered the whole South for white as well as colored farmers. But even Booker Washington's imagination did not reach forward to the time, after his death, when a five-thousand-dollar motor truck named "The Booker T. Washington Agricultural School on Wheels" would be given by Negro farmers "in appreciation of Tuskegee Institute and in memory of Booker T. Washington, who helped to make Negro extension work possible and who loved the country people and the great out-of-doors."

In the last year of his life Booker Washington expanded this "movable school in a wagon" into one of the most highly multiplying of all his rural extension projects. With the aid of funds provided under the Federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914 for helping agricultural education, he developed multiple

"Short Course" schools, under the direction of Tom Campbell. They spread steadily into every part of the state and were carried out on the farmers' own land. Experts taught the men seed selection, the strengthening of soil by varied crops, hog, cow, poultry, and corn raising, pasture making, home gardening, and tool repair. Women experts instructed the wives and daughters in garden cultivation, health preservation, vermin destruction, insect fighting, cooking, sewing, washing, ironing, and other subjects. School boys and girls took part in the demonstrations. In this way their teachers caught glimpses of ways of gearing education for better farming into the daily lessons of the school.

All the lines of stimulus and of training given to the farmers and their wives were paralleled by added courses in the training of the new generation in Tuskegee itself. The Principal's executive files contain numerous notes like the following from him: "To Mrs. Washington. The course of study submitted by Mr. Williston for a Middle and Senior girls' course in garden making has been approved by the Executive Council, and I am writing to authorize you to see that it is put in force for the next school year."

Looking back over the perspective of the Farmers' Educational Extension Work, it is significant that, during the decade from 1900 to 1910, the total value of farm property owned by Negroes in the United States rose from one hundred and seventy-seven million dollars to four hundred and ninety-three millions, or an increase of one hundred and seventy-seven per cent. Impressive as that increase was, it left, as it still leaves more than half a century after Washington's pioneer initiative, areas of rural Negro life—as well as of rural white life—in the grip of the sharecropper system.

Illiteracy, Booker Washington could see, was one of the most stubborn obstacles in the path of the second emancipa-



tion. Numerous little schools for colored children were scattered through the cotton belt; but as he traveled among them, he saw that all too many colored teachers in these isolated spots were slack, inefficient and poorly trained. The school buildings were, in a majority of cases, tumbledown wooden shacks, a church in disrepair, a disused cowshed, or even the borrowed family living room of a farmer. The positive resistance of an illiterate parent—often the grandmother of an illegitimate brood of her daughters' offspring—was against taking the child from toil on the land to nonproductive work in school. Even where the teacher and the building were reasonably adequate, the mortgage-holding white planter would often insist on all colored children leaving school throughout the manuring and cotton-picking months so that all hands could be working on his soil. And the debt-serfs could not have resisted his will, even if they had wished to do so.

Here was a situation that had been the despair of many educators who desired to achieve reform but could see no hope of hacking a path through this dense growth of economic, social, and psychological jungle. Booker Washington set to work to develop a mobile group of school demonstrators and supervisors alongside the mobile wagon organization. He envisaged keen young men and women going round the schools to stimulate, guide, and generally reinforce the teachers, and to rally the children and their parents to see the value of education and to increase school attendance. By the year 1907 his advocacy of this idea had captured the imagination of a wealthy Philadelphia woman, Miss Anna T. Jeanes. She invested a million dollars in a Negro Rural School Fund, the interest of which was to be used in training, equipping, and sending out such technically-equipped colored educators. She formally created this endowment fund in perpetuity on April 18, 1907, the income to be applied primarily "toward the

maintenance and assistance of elementary schools for Negroes in the Southern States." Hollis B. Frissell, then principal of Hampton Institute, and Booker T. Washington were named as trustees of the fund.

From the outset Washington saw that these traveling teacher-trainers would have more influence if they were backed by the state department of education. From this total initiative the now world-famous "Jeanes Teachers" enterprise has expanded. Miss Virginia Randolph, a graduate of Tuskegee, was the first colored Jeanes Fund teacher to take the road and help to train local leadership. The simple central principle of their activity has been found capable of adaptation, not only throughout the colored and other rural schools of the United States, but in Africa and Asia. Within a quarter of a century colored Jeanes teachers, usually young husbands and wives trained and sent out together, could be found on every continent and in many islands, sometimes starting education in the bush where no school existed. The British, American, and German governments and missionary organizations sent observers to Tuskegee to prepare for transplanting the experiment into Africa, in particular. Numerous progressive educational theorists after visiting Tuskegee and watching these teachers at work, gave a verdict like that of Professor Paul Monroe of Columbia University: "What we are discussing, you are doing."

A second educational project of almost equally sensational potentialities was meanwhile germinating in Booker Washington's inventive mind. He set to work to plan a project for securing better school buildings. He persuaded one of the executive directors of Standard Oil, Henry H. Rogers, to give six hundred dollars a month for a year's experiment toward betterment of the little schools in Macon County around Tuskegee. So happy was the donor over the results that he both lengthened the years for his gift to run and widened

its range to do the same for several other counties in Alabama.

Washington then cultivated the interest of Julius Rosenwald, the directing mind behind Sears, Roebuck and Company, the giant mail-order firm in Chicago. The secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in Chicago had already stirred Rosenwald's enthusiastic support locally for putting up a network of Y.M.C.A. buildings for colored youth. Washington soon carried Rosenwald's interest southward into the support of some of his "miniature Tuskeges"—or local farmers' demonstration units, already described. As he did not use all the money presented by Rosenwald for this purpose, Washington asked the donor if he might dedicate the remainder to building model rural schoolhouses in the Deep South. Following his agreement that this should be done, Rosenwald in 1912, after correspondence with Booker Washington, established a fund on the principle that any project for building a Negro school on an agreed model would receive from him dollar for dollar of the amount raised by the farmers and others whose children would attend it. "I believe," Rosenwald wrote in a letter to Washington in August 1912, "it is wise to make the condition as to the raising of an equal amount, because the incentive will be great for others to give." So successful was this beginning that a five-year plan was inaugurated in August 1914 for building a hundred new rural schoolhouses. To no one of these would the Rosenwald Fund pay more than three hundred and fifty dollars; and the total levy upon the Fund for the hundred buildings was not to exceed thirty thousand dollars. The Extension Department of Tuskegee Institute was to approve the architectural plans and to supervise the erection of the buildings. Care was to be taken here, as under the Jeanes Fund, to coöperate, wherever possible, with the state supervisors of Negro rural schools and with the state, county, or township school officers.

This fund, established on Rosenwald's fiftieth birthday, in-

creased to unimagined dimensions. Before his death the donor had put millions of dollars into the expansion and development of school buildings for Negroes. Over five thousand school buildings have been put up, admirably constructed, modern, and attractive; and the process continues. The fifty per cent contribution by the Rosenwald Fund diminished to eighteen per cent as public support by the Negroes grew. School libraries, motor transport to and from schools, and many other services were carried through by this Fund which was, as we have seen, the direct fruit of Booker Washington's initiative. To each of the thousands of communities who now own these schools has come, as Leo M. Favrot, General Field Agent of the General Education Board, said at the National Education Association in Atlanta, in 1929, "a new vision, a new outlook on life, a community self-respect." Actually hundreds of white schools used the Rosenwald building plans, the blueprints of which were made at Tuskegee. More striking still, the Interstate Building Service of America for both the white and colored races owed its origin to the Rosenwald-Tuskegee emphasis on careful planning and construction of rural school-houses for Negroes.

Nor was this the last of the sensationally successful expansions that sprang from Washington's incessant practice of his principle of going out to seek and diagnose a real need and then gearing fresh resources toward meeting it. Andrew Carnegie, fired by the blend of the practical with the adventurous and the imaginative in the program of "this great and good man"—as he described Booker Washington—acceded to the Principal's suggestion that he finance a program of books, pamphlets, and press service to give publicity to the need of the Negro population. For this purpose, a Committee of Twelve was set up. The Research Department at Tuskegee was started under Monroe Work, who, as we have seen,

served in Tuskegee from 1908 until 1945. Questions reached Booker Washington from all over the world with regard to the life and problems of the Negro; Work collected the answers and saw in them the embryo of a Negro Year Book. Emmett Scott and Monroe Work together formed a Negro Year Book Company, for which a thousand dollars of Carnegie's money provided the initial capital, and printed five thousand copies of their Year Book. The sales were so successful that they provided a revolving fund. That Negro Year Book, normally produced in alternate years, was of high value on the desks of newspaper editors and in educational libraries in giving information that improved interracial understanding and helped forward reform by giving definite facts and figures as to the conditions and legal status under which the Negro lived.

Washington used another part of the same Carnegie Fund to call together colored teachers from different parts of the states for conference on common problems and projects. From that gathering sprang the increasingly influential National Association of Colored Teachers.

The "second emancipation" received new stimulus from two other creations of Booker Washington's genius, in co-operation with Emmett Scott's executive power: the National Negro Business League and the National Negro Health Week. As Washington traveled from state to state, he met Negro businessmen in every city. He realized as he talked with them their deep need for coöperation in protecting themselves from unjust economic pressure, in developing the strength of trades and professions, in pooling new business ideas, and in sharing common projects. At the beginning of 1900 he, in company with the leading Negro journalist of the day, T. Thomas Fortune, and his own intimate colleague, Emmett Scott, planned a National Negro Business League. It first

met in August of that year at Boston. Washington expressed his unwavering conviction that achievement in prosperous citizenship in the long run gave a platform from which to win political and social status. Drawing on experience in all parts of America he said, "Whether in the North or in the South, wherever I have seen a black man who was succeeding in his business, who was a taxpayer, and who possessed intelligence and high character, that individual was treated with the highest respect by the members of the white race. In proportion as we can multiply these examples, North and South, will our problem be solved." He did not bring into his discussion the fact that so many Negro men of intelligence, high character, and industry, because of the inequitable pressures of their environment, are frustrated by unjust discrimination from ever rising. By concentrating, however, on the stimulus of challenge and the power of coöperation, Booker Washington and the secretary of the League, Emmett Scott, made that organization a lever for advancing the cause of the Negro in business throughout the United States. Specific trades and professions developed associations in affiliation with the parent league. These included the National Associations of Negro Bankers, Insurance Companies, the Press, the Bar, the Medical Profession, Retail Merchants, Funeral Directors, and Tailors.

When he presided over the annual conferences of the National Business League, Booker Washington used a similar technique of stimulus by personal witness that he employed in the Farmers' Conferences. He brought to the platform men who had triumphed over obstacles and climbed from poverty to prosperity by hard work and intelligent planning and integrity. No thought was given in those days to any challenge against the whole character of a competitive economic order. To make Booker Washington's silence on that issue a basis for criticizing his policy and program is to fail to carry our own

consciousness back into the mental climate of the first decade of this century. He presided over the conferences of that League until 1915, when his last presidential speech was delivered at a time when he himself had only a few months to live. By that time over six hundred local leagues constituted the national body. The increase in Negro business enterprises was from 20,000 in 1900 to 45,000 in 1915, including the phenomenal development from two banks to fifty-one.

The establishment of a Negro Health Week was part of Washington's incessant plea that the life of the two races is inseparably bound together. Taking as a model an initial experiment of a State Negro Health Week made in Virginia by Major Moton of Hampton Institute, he launched the project on a national scale in the last year of his life, as the National Negro Health Improvement Week. Geographical segregation, he demonstrated, does not protect one race from the diseases of another. "You white people live in one part of town; the colored in another. But disease knows no color line," he pointed out in one of his speeches. "A colored wash-erwoman," he said, "went to get the washing as usual from a white home. 'Don't come in,' said the white mother, 'as my children have scarlet fever.' 'Well, laws, that's strange,' said the colored mother; 'my children had that weeks ago!'"

Washington spent much of his waning strength that year in getting white and Negro people to collaborate in promoting this Negro Health Improvement Week. He persuaded the mayor of his town and then the governor of his state to proclaim the observance of such a week and obtained the collaboration of state health officers. From them he went to the president of the Southern Association of State Health Officers. Then he sent Monroe Work up to the nation's capital, where he secured the backing of the Surgeon General for the project on a national scale. The U. S. Public Health Service took over

the plan and modified its title so that it became National Negro Health Week. Outstanding improvement in the health of the Negro population has resulted in subsequent years from the sustained work done through the demonstrations, lectures, sermons, school talks, and other processes used to carry forward on a national scale this child of Booker Washington's initiative.

This survey of decades of expansion in the interests of a second emancipation from poverty, ignorance, and disease, demonstrates one outstanding quality of his larger statecraft. He mobilized men and women to one immediate practical project after another. He put trained technicians in charge and called on wealthy men of good will for funds. His instinct for blending sound principle with actual application in manageable organization led in all these cases to the adoption and adaptation of his pioneering plans on an ever-widening scale. He blended uncanny accuracy in diagnosis of ills with inventive prescription toward their cure, unswerving aim in principle with flexibility of method, and managed to combine constant touch with the common man with far-ranging action on a national and even international scale.



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## THE MAN IN HIS FAMILY

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The problem of sustaining an intimate harmonious family life might well baffle any man so intensely preoccupied as was Booker Washington with vast and exacting tasks. Yet to fail in the family would be to abdicate from authority as a Christian educator.

Talks with Washington's children, notably with Mrs. Portia Pitman, the daughter of his first wife, with his niece, Mrs. Gaillard, and his younger son, Ernest Davidson Washington, as well as with intimate friends on his faculty, give material for a clear picture.

His relationship with his elder brother, John H. Washington, in their boyhood and youth has already been suggested, as well as John's place in the early building of the faculty. Having assisted young Booker to go through Hampton Institute by staying at home to help sustain the family, John was in turn aided by his graduate brother to take the courses at Hampton where he graduated in 1879. He joined the Tuskegee staff in 1885 at a salary of thirty dollars a month. He married a West Virginia girl from Charleston in 1886, and the young couple lived with the Principal after his first wife died. Later, John and his wife occupied successive cottages on the campus where seven children were born, one of whom—Mrs. Gaillard—became a teacher of English at Tuskegee. Equipped with his Hampton training, John was eminently fitted to handle the industrial features of the school. He carried forward his brother's coeducational plans by developing the

girls' trades and industries alongside those of the boys. Racing round the campus in a Tuskegee-built buggy drawn by a spirited horse, John's sturdy figure and bearded face were daily seen in almost every department of the Institute. He matched Booker's devotion to vegetable growing and pig raising with a passion for bee culture and the development of fine poultry. Unlike his younger brother, John loved athletic games, and enthusiastically developed baseball on the campus. John, through a number of years, knew the name of every Tuskegee student, and, as new ones came in, he tested their aptitudes and assigned each to his or her respective department, until the Principal, seeing his brother overloaded, secured J. H. Palmer as John's assistant and later as registrar. In his steady insistence upon the close integration of the academic with the industrial sides of the work, John Washington carried through rigorously his brother's basic principle. By taking the brunt of the detailed administration John was always doing for his younger brother what he had done as a boy in wearing down the sharp prickles of the rough new flaxen shirts. "Nothing unpleasant would reach Booker Washington," said John's daughter, Mrs. Gaillard, "if father could hold it back from him."

The Principal was not unmindful of the consequent tax on John's energy and nerve. Recognising how desperately tired his brother and another of the early builders of Tuskegee, Lewis Adams, had become, he secured through a friend, in the summer of 1901, enough money to send them both on a voyage to England and Europe. John's letters from Britain showed characteristically greater interest in the countryside than in the historic cities, comparing its crops and animals with those of the southern states—and incidentally lamenting the apparent absence of hogs!

The harmonious coöperative weaving of the pattern of

education at Tuskegee by the two brothers went on continuously until the Principal's death. In that process John's steady cultivation of friendly relations with the white citizens of Tuskegee town was of outstanding value, especially in the earlier days when racial tensions were not infrequently high. After the loss of his brother, John's strength flagged. He kept at his post for another four years until 1919, when he retired, but he continued to live on the campus and to visit, so long as strength permitted, the different departments of Tuskegee in the development of which he had played so creative but unobtrusive a role.

The younger half sister of John and Booker, Amanda, did not leave the home town of Malden in West Virginia. She married a Mr. Johnston there, and, during her widowhood, achieved a place of unusually high esteem among both the white and colored population of Malden and Charleston. She lacked adequate finances of her own, and the brothers built her a substantial brick house at Malden. Here Booker often visited her on his journeys, and took care that she had sufficient coal and other necessities. When she was stricken with paralysis early in 1915 Booker hastened to her with his younger son, Davidson, and stayed by her until she seemed to be out of danger. She died suddenly, however, a few days later.

In 1882 Booker traveled from Tuskegee to his old home in Malden to marry Fannie N. Smith. Her daughter Portia (Mrs. Pitman) recalled that her mother was a childhood sweetheart of Booker's from the early Malden days. While teaching there he had trained her in preparation for Hampton, where she graduated. She died when she was only twenty-six, soon after her daughter's birth. The impression she made during her all-too-short relationship with Tuskegee endured. Fifty years later old citizens of Tuskegee spoke of her as modest,

kind, mingling helpfully with the people of the town, and eager to shoulder responsibility in carrying forward her husband's work in those early days whenever he was away.

Mrs. Pitman's recollections of her father showed the blend in him of direction, affection, and forward-looking care. His habit of life was so systematic and so full of work that he "had little to say to his children and he expected a great deal from us; but he wanted us to have the very best training possible." He sent Portia at the age of eleven to a training school at Framingham, Massachusetts, the town where her stepmother, Olivia Davidson Washington, had received much of her education. There Portia lived for four years. She recalled how, when she was at home, "when father wanted to make a speech he would walk up and down and deliver the speech to me and ask how I liked it. I thought it was grand!"

When she was a girl at school her father was constantly sending books to her. She recalled among these *Aesop's Fables*, *Stories from the Greeks*, *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, and *The Knights of the Round Table*. He also made special arrangements for her to have physical exercises for her health in Boston. "He was," she said, "the most thoughtful person I ever knew in my life. He was very affectionate and sympathetic," she went on. "He used to help me with mathematics, which I hated. Once he gave me a really terrible scolding; and then came back later and was very penitent for having been so severe. We never at home began the day without prayer," Mrs. Pitman continued, "and we closed the day with prayer in the evening. He read the Bible to us at breakfast each day and prayed; that was never missed. Really he prayed all the time. His faith built Tuskegee. On all his travels he always carried Shakespeare with him and read him constantly." Repeatedly his speeches showed how he brooded over his Shakespeare until the inner meaning of the scenes saturated his spirit.

Dramatizing the uneasy conscience of many Americans in the presence of racial discrimination against the background of the Declaration of Independence, he said: "Wherever the stars and stripes float, there the sentiment to be governed implies the right to govern; and that sentiment, like Banquo's ghost 'will not down.'" And again drawing a picture of the contrast between the fact of slavery and the need of the freed Negro, he said: "Slavery exemplified Othello's order, 'Put out the light'—put out the light of liberty and then put out the light of intelligence. Now the reversal of the process—"Turn on the light"—is the imperative injunction."

Seeing that Portia had a special gift for music and was eager to learn languages, her father sent her to Germany for training. He put her in charge of one of the outstanding Christian leaders there, Dr. Karl Axenfeldt, who translated *Up from Slavery* into German. Later she crossed to England and spent considerable time there, by her father's arrangement, in the home of the colored musical genius, Coleridge-Taylor. Mrs. Pitman later gave outstanding musical help to Tuskegee by training its famous choir. She took part in the unveiling of her father's bust in the Hall of Fame in New York in 1946.

Olivia A. Davidson, who was the first member to join Booker Washington's staff six weeks after the school started in July 1881, became the Principal's second wife in 1885. Her education at the Normal Training School at Framingham and her zest for literature had given her a wider cultural background than Hampton and Wayland had given to her husband. The older members of the faculty were of one mind in the conviction that her sense of style and her knowledge of the attitudes of the white people in the North helped to make his oratory at once more sensitive and more convincing. It seems clear that her very early experience in collecting money for the infant Tuskegee school from friends in the North was

of incalculable value. For it was she who put into Washington's mind the idea of going to New England and then to New York for larger backing among the wealthy industrialists than could be provided by the then impoverished South. After their marriage she continued her responsibilities as Lady Principal, although a Dean of Women Students was also appointed. Two sons were born to them, Booker Taliaferro Jr. and Ernest Davidson. A fire broke out in the home just after the birth of the younger child. The mother was hastily removed from the house; the strain and exposure, however, were too much for her. Seriously ill, she was taken by her husband on the long journey to Boston for the best surgical and medical aid, but this was without avail and she died there in the hospital.

Mrs. Pitman remembered, as a girl at home, her father's zest in the life of his two tiny boys after the death of his second wife. He loved to take one or other of them out in front of him on his gray horse or in the trotting buggy when going over the campus. The difficulty of concentrating simultaneously on his paternal and official duties, she recalled, came out one day when, having started out with a baby boy, he returned home without him and could not remember where he had left the child. In some agitation he telephoned to one department after another until he found his small son. During his widowed life he arranged for one or other of the women teachers to stay in his home and look after the children, especially during his absence on speaking tours. "When anything went seriously wrong while he was away," Mrs. Pitman recalled, "he would cancel his engagements and return. When I had typhoid fever as a girl he gave up his speaking tour and came back to look after me. He did the same again years later, in 1908, after I was married and my baby boy was taken seriously ill."

Booker Washington's niece, Mrs. Gaillard, recalled that "no matter how many trips my uncle made he always brought

back to his children and to us fresh gifts. He would buy dolls and mechanical toys. The thing that always stands out for me in regard to his character is that love for all his family." Evidently when going on some of his long journeys he found delight in having one or other of them occasionally with him. Mrs. Pitman remembered her journeys to Kentucky and Massachusetts with her father, while he took his niece as far afield as California. At home he enjoyed reading aloud to his family.

His principal social occasion in the home was the Sunday morning breakfast. He habitually used this for getting into closer personal touch with his faculty, and especially with new teachers on the staff. He quietly sounded them during the meal to discover whether they were finding satisfaction in their work and were on harmonious terms with their colleagues and students.

The maternal care of Booker's three children fell ultimately to his third wife, Margaret Murray, to whom he was married in 1893. She was born in Macon, Mississippi, in 1865—the year of emancipation. One of a family of ten children of very poor parents, she went at her own wish on the day after her father's death, when she was seven years old, into the home of white Quakers from the North, a brother and sister named Sanders, and never again went home to live. She said afterwards that the force which pulled her was a burning desire for knowledge; which was, in fact, a dominant characteristic throughout her life. "I used to sit up late at night and get up early in the morning to study. I am sorry to say that sometimes I would hide away under the house in order to read."

"Would thee like to teach?" asked her Quaker teacher when she was fourteen years old. Borrowing a long skirt as a dress, the small girl walked into the town and passed an examination which was set by a friendly judge. On the following day she

taught in the schoolroom where twenty-four hours earlier she had been a pupil. In the days when the young Booker Washington watched the Ku Klux Klan terrorizing the colored people and their friends in Malden, the same Klan laid its sinister coffin, the threat of death, on the porch of the Quaker school where Margaret Murray taught.

Still determined to climb the ladder of learning, she moved to Fisk University at Nashville, Tennessee, where she earned her way through the years of college education. On her graduation day in June 1889, Booker Washington, who had at that time been developing Tuskegee for eight years, was taking part in the Commencement ceremonies at Fisk. He sat opposite Margaret Murray at dinner. She had arranged to go to teach in Texas. Somehow she found, by some process that she never could fully understand, that she was going to be Lady Principal at Tuskegee! Four years later she and Booker were married.

At Tuskegee, in addition to her duties in the home with the three children of the first two marriages, she took charge of all the industries for girls on the campus. As she watched her husband conduct the Negro Farmers' Conferences, she was disturbed by the fact that the discussions took little account of the woman's part in the second emancipation. At once down in Tuskegee town she developed a mothers' meeting on Saturdays that drew farmers' wives in from the streets where they were lounging, smoking, and bantering the men. This rapidly developed into an active group of over two hundred women. As their children rather disturbed the meeting, but could not be left alone on the farms, she arranged a parallel meeting for them in Tuskegee.

She made a fresh experiment in a tumbledown rural settlement round a plantation some eight miles from Tuskegee, where she and some of the Tuskegee women teachers secured



permission to hold a meeting in one of the most slatternly cabins. The meeting started with the cleaning up of the cabin. Within a few weeks the women of the settlement were clamoring for a day school, for no education was given there. The owner of the plantation gave an old cabin for a school-house. An eager Tuskegee graduate, Miss Davis, offered her services and moved into the one-room home and school combined, with her salary subscribed for by the staff at Tuskegee. Soon the local Negro cultivators and their wives gave either in foodstuffs or money enough to support the school, and their appreciation of it steadily grew. Within three years a ten-acre lot had been bought, and a three-room house built. On the ten acres the boys and girls learned how to raise grain crops, vegetables, and fruit to support their teacher, and carried to their own homes plans for growing foods that no Alabama garden had ever seen.

This miracle of creating hope from the soil of despondency, and coöperative initiative out of individual shiftlessness revealed Margaret Murray's genius for helping forward Booker Washington's lifework. Her replies to her husband's official notes on campus affairs show not only the independence of her judgment but her ability and readiness to tell him frankly when his judgment was based on partial and misleading evidence and needed to be revised. The value of her readiness to challenge his action in the interests of other members of the Faculty is seen in an official note from her to him in 1901:

Mr. Washington. I notice that in sending out these notes, in which you ask for cases of waste on the part of various divisions, you state that you will see that no persons' names are used. . . . In some way the names of the persons who gave information have been made known, and they have met with ugliness on the part of the people whom they have reported. . . . I heard Mr. Lee say that almost everyone connected with the Bible Training School had been ugly to him ever since he made the report.

Meanwhile, in their home Mrs. Washington was entertaining the distinguished visitors from many lands, giving counsel to women teachers and the wives of the men teachers, as well as being mother-confessor to uncounted numbers of girl students. Beyond the frontiers of the campus, she gave leadership as president of the Southern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, as well as editor of its official periodical. An able author, she wrote numerous articles to newspapers and magazines on the life and problems and projects of the colored women of America.

In every way open to her Margaret Murray Washington advanced the cause to which Booker Washington had dedicated his life, and for twenty-two years sustained his life by creating a restful home. She survived him by ten years, dying in 1925 at the age of sixty.

As his sons went on from boyhood into manhood Washington saw to it that they learned a handicraft alongside the other students—brickmaking in the case of the older son—before going on to a university. A letter from Booker T. Jr., written in January 1912 on correspondence paper with the printed letterhead, *The Fisk Herald: Fisk University: Booker T. Washington, Jr., Editor*, will recall to most fathers similar notes: "My dear Papa: I hate to have to bother you about money matters, but I must have some as it requires more money in my senior year than it did when I was not a senior. Trusting that you will give this matter your immediate attention, Your son, Booker."

Did his father as he read that letter recall his own early striving as janitor and waiter to earn the bare necessities for his courses at Hampton, his conscience burdened with a debt for board which not even his strenuous efforts could lift?

A letter received by Washington on the last of his holidays, in 1915, from his elder son shows that the interest in building

schoolhouses that was developed in the boy's days at Tuskegee had increased after graduation from Fisk University:

My dear Papa, I am glad that you are off for a vacation for a few days where you can hunt, fish and take things easy for a while.

When I left you in Montgomery Saturday morning and told you that I had a meeting on for that afternoon at a place called Sledges, you remember you said you did not think there would be much of a crowd because it was Saturday and that was a bad day to get a gathering for a meeting. Do you know that you were mistaken this time, for we had a large gathering. The patrons cleared from their lunches and refreshments \$20. On the following day, which was Sunday, at a place called Snowdown we raised \$65 in cash to help in the Schoolhouse Building Movement. On the same day at another community called Rising Star the patrons raised \$57 in cash. So you see we are going right on with this Schoolhouse Building Movement in the various communities. Your loving son, Booker.<sup>1</sup>

When enjoying holidays with his family Washington found the greatest benefit in the bracing atmosphere of the North Atlantic coast. In succession he spent vacation periods in the summer at the old Crawford House in Scollay Square, Boston, at Blue Hills, Milton, a few miles out of Boston, at South Weymouth nearby, at Huntington on Long Island, and finally at Northport, Long Island, where he bought a house. It would seem probable that, as in the case of the journey to Europe, his northern friends, out of concern for his health, financed these vacation periods. As a matter of fact, he filled a considerable part of the time with work, particularly writing, which in part accounts for the number of books he was able to produce in an intensely busy life of administration and travel. He also saw a number of northern friends of Tuskegee,

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<sup>1</sup> The schoolhouse building movement referred to is that supported by the Rosenwald Fund.

discussing with them plans for further development and securing increased financial support.

One absorbing holiday recreation was fishing. This habit was formed from the days when, as a boy in West Virginia, he would slip away to the Kenawah River to fish. At times he would go down to the most southerly point of Alabama at Coden and enjoy fishing there. A postcard from that place written one September to the family reads: "Got up at five this morning. Caught fifty fish yesterday. Look after the garden and chickens." In one of his very rare soliloquies on his own habits he wrote: "Aside from horseback riding, nothing rests me more and delights my soul more than to get on some stream near an old-fashioned swimming pool, with the root of a tree close by, and to spend as many hours as I can in fishing with the old-time pole and line. The new-fangled fishing apparatus I have never had any use for or success with." At the end of a humorous colloquy on his miserable luck in recent years in failing to find fish ready to be caught, he ends by saying that he was driven to agreement with the comment that the only fisherman who really told the truth was Peter who said, "We have toiled all night and caught nothing." But at Coden all was changed. "Mobile Bay has numerous inlets, rivers, and bayous, and fishing is not only good in the open deep water, but especially good in these numerous inlets. I caught more fish in the few days I was in the region of Coden than I have ever caught in all my experience in fishing in all parts of the country combined."

The picture of Booker Washington at home that lingers most pleasantly in the memory of his relatives and colleagues sets him where he himself found great ease of spirit—in his garden: a sturdy elderly man in his shirt sleeves, seeing, as he himself put it "how many little chicks are just beginning to creep through the shells," feeding his poultry, weeding his onion patch, and sorting his lettuce bed.

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MINISTRY OF INTERPRETATION

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When Booker Washington became recognized as the outstanding leader of his race in America, a heavy yoke of interracial interpretation descended upon his shoulders. In spite of his intense preoccupation with Tuskegee, he did not shirk this new responsibility, although its exercise brought upon him bitter criticism from many of his own race and additional Herculean labor. Committed as he was by conviction and by temperament to attempt progress by winning over enemies to his side rather than by head-on attack upon them, he worked by reconciliation and by compromise upon what he felt to be, for the time being, nonessentials. His main instruments in that process were good-will tours and their accompanying oratory, authorship, and contacts that aimed at money-raising.

A letter to the President of the United States, written on October 20th, 1908, opens a window upon his motive and method in the good-will travel, which was carried on mainly in the South. The fact that he wrote reporting progress to the White House shows that he saw this task as a part of the central stream of contemporary American history.

My dear President Roosevelt: I have just returned from a ten days' trip through the State of Mississippi and certain parts of Arkansas, speaking to both white and colored people, concerning the education of the Negro. My main point in Mississippi was so to reach and influence the white people as to break down the Vardaman sentiment against the education of the Negro. I am more than pleased with the success of the effort. Everywhere the

meetings were attended by the very best class of white people in the State.

Vardaman, [a bitter opponent of Negro education] of course, is very mad, and is abusing the white people who attended the meetings in so large numbers. This is just what I wanted. His abuse of the white people will make them realize how harmful he is.

I was surprised, too, at the fine lot of influential and liberal white people which I found in the state. With one exception all the daily newspapers in the state came out strongly in favor of my effort.

He undertook such tours, also, in the North and less frequently in the West. These also had an interpretative goal, although of a different kind. In the South the main problem was to win the white people to positive support of Negro education; in the North, because people were already zealous for that education, the first need was to convert that enthusiasm into hard cash. The goal common to his visits to the North and the South was to wean each from the antagonisms born of post-war embitterment into a constructive coöperative program. In that business of interpretation he never said anything to any one group—colored or white, North or South—that he would not say to any other audience.

In preparation for such visits and for his good-will tours Booker Washington had what his colleagues call his grapevine system of information. Leading sympathetic citizens of both races, whose fingers were on the pulse of local race feeling, informed him in advance as to the situation that would face him, and Monroe Work with his research facilities at Tuskegee armed him with firsthand facts about the Negroes in a particular state: their holdings in land and business, a comparison between the expenditures per capita on the education of white and colored boys and girls, and so on. Exclamations were frequently overheard by his colleagues, like that of the

mystified Negro who said: "I don' understand it! Massa Washington he ain't nevah ben here befo'; yit he knows mo' 'bout dese parts an' mo' 'bout us den wot eny o' us knows ourselves!"

Here is a single example out of many. Speaking in 1911 in Texas to a gathering of 5000 Negroes and 2000 whites, he said:

Colored people in Texas own and pay taxes on \$30,000,000 worth of property. In 1900 the colored people in this State owned and paid taxes on 70,000 farms; during the last ten years they have bought 4,000 additional farms. . . . I urge upon all my people the importance of their owning land, of their getting out of the city into the rural districts, on to the soil. . . . I find, further, that last year the colored people raised in Texas about 465,000 bales of cotton, valued at about \$32,000,000; that they raised 16,000,000 bushels of corn, valued at about \$12,000,000. Colored people living by other forms of occupation than farming, earned about \$10,000,000 more, making the total earnings in Texas for our race about \$50,000,000.

In the Texan Negro these statistics excited emulation. To the hardheaded Texan white man, eager for the enrichment of that vast state, then in its early stages of development, the statistics were both new and eloquent. They convinced him that a Negro well-equipped in mind, body, and estate could help the whole community to make progress. Booker Washington's statistics were never dull. They shot out sparks that fired men to action, personal and corporate.

One reason for this concentration upon facts sprang from Washington's insistence on facing actual issues rather than taking refuge in vague generalizations. "You cannot," he said, "in Harlem solve the problem of Alabama; and in Alabama you cannot understand the problem of Harlem."

The abysmal ignorance with which he was often faced is illustrated in an extreme form in an incident at Little Rock,

Arkansas, when Washington was on a good-will tour in 1908. He was speaking on a very hot day to a packed mass meeting in the theater. A colleague who could not get in listened to two white hillbillies who sat outside chewing tobacco and squirting the juice across the pavement. "Who's that speakin' in thar?" asked one. "Oh, that's Booker Washington," his friend replied. "He's pretty smart for a nigger, ain't he? What does he do?" "Oh, he's the niggers' President." It turned out that neither of these white men, whose racial pride shone through in the sneer, "Pretty smart for a nigger," could read or write. Washington's colleague who overheard these remarks commented bitterly to the author in narrating the experience, "No matter how great a genius a man may be, no matter what we do, the peak of praise is 'Pretty smart for a nigger.'"

Washington saw an ominous menace in the hold of that myth of racial superiority on those ignorant arrogant white men. To him it seemed as clear as crystal that education for coöperation between both races, to lift the economic, cultural, political, and social status of each, was the sole path that held solid promise. By means of his mastery of facts, aided by his uncanny psychological insight, he secured favorable verdicts from unpromising assemblies in which whites crowded the floor and colored people the gallery. Addressing himself to the white section of the audience he would cite examples of the way in which they had assisted his race to make more progress in half a century than any other race had done. As they glowed with satisfaction he would ask why this achievement should be marred by unjust discrimination in education, the denial of justice in courts, mob violence, and economic exploitation. Turning to the Negro group he made them swell with pride at the steps in progress made since the Civil War and Emancipation, and then lamented the blots on that record



due to indolence, shiftlessness, vice, and unreliability. He would then rally each group to put its shoulder to the wheel of progress for the sake of both races and for the advancement of their nation as a whole.

In his good-will tours in any southern state arrangements were generally made, after Washington's friends had talked with the leading friendly white and colored citizens, that he should come as the guest of the state, invited by the governor and by the officials of the towns that he visited. He would spend from four to six days in each state and often spoke six or even eight times each day. Some of the meetings were for colored people only; others for white people only; and always there was a mass meeting for both races. The central theme was consistent. He never appealed for the Negro on the ground of pity, but gave facts as to the positive accomplishments already achieved by the colored people against their background of disabilities; the economic value to the South of what had been done, and the limitless possibilities for real reconstruction for both races that could be achieved by the all-round education of the Negro. He stood to his position that the Negro was not seeking social interrelationship; but that he must have recognition of his cultural and economic right to advancement, so that he could prove himself as a fruitful American citizen. The fact that, for example, a governor of Mississippi with a reputation for racial bitterness offered Washington the use of his private car for his good-will tour through that state is, on the one hand a proof of his power to win good will, but is also used as a basis for criticism on the ground that his appeasement of the conservative South went too far.

Many Negro leaders, especially in the North, were moved to bitter indignation against him for failure to launch into expressions of blazing indignation against the subtle, sinister

menace to life and liberty that faced, and still faces, in many parts of the South any colored man or woman showing resentment or rebellion against the relentless pressure of the racial caste system. His published and unpublished speeches suggest, however, that he did, face to face with white southern audiences, expose them to penetrating challenges, although not to bitter denunciation, and moreover, that his fire-eating critics debarred themselves from any such opportunity by their fierce frontal attacks.

The frankness with which Washington successfully criticized southern planters face to face for their blunders and sins in their relations with the Negroes on their land was made possible by his skilled psychological approach. A verbatim manuscript report, running to some four thousand words, of one of his many statements to white southerners can be briefly summarized.

"I can't learn how to work free Negroes," said a wealthy white ex-slave owner to Washington soon after he initiated the Tuskegee Institute. "There," Washington argued, "is the crux. The slave could be worked. The freeman must be induced to work. If a white planter wants to borrow money, the Bank asks how many reliable Negro tenants will work for him. Two and a third million Negroes are working for him in the South. He does not want them to leave the South, as they are free to do. What, then, is to be done?" Washington then gave numerous examples of white trickery. Two will suffice. One was of a planter who refused to let his Negroes have larger acreage to cultivate, because they could then make a profit and buy land. He thus, Washington pointed out, reduced their productivity and stimulated them to leave the South. The second was a planter who, after agreeing with a tenant that six bales of cotton covered his rent and purchases, found out that the Negro had at home two more bales that he

meant to sell, so he called him back and insisted that he give him those two bales—an act which the Negro “grapevine telegraph” soon bruited far and wide. That kind of treatment, Washington showed, discourages the Negro from working hard, as under it he can never free himself from debt. These and other hard-hitting examples showed the white men how these and other low practices, such as discouraging Negro education, which drives decent Negroes to the city, in the long run hit the planter as hard as they hit the Negro.

He then swung round in that same speech and gave numerous examples, with names and addresses, of planters who encouraged productivity of varied crops, helped to build good cottages, encouraged steady rural schoolteaching and attendance at school; all with outstanding benefit to themselves as well as to the contented, intelligent, healthy Negro community. At the end he clinched the argument with a new statement of the principle from which he had started:

Education increases the wants of the individual. No man of any race works without an incentive. The fewer the wants of the individual the fewer days in the week does he work. But if through education the wants of the individual are multiplied and enlarged so that he wants education for his children, better food, more clothes, better house furniture, better stock, wants a newspaper, books and a bank account, more days' work will be the result. The hardest man to keep at regular work is the fellow whose wants are satisfied with a little coarse food, a bottle of whisky and a chew of tobacco.

A critic might contend that the whole argument is materialistic and rests on the usefulness of the Negro to the white planter and not on his inherent rights as a man. Washington would reply—as shown by his speeches—that the essence of the issue lies in the interdependence of the two races. Further criticism of Washington sprang from his supposed neglect of

political as distinguished from economic issues. He constantly worked in the political field; but always in direct firsthand wrestling with an actual issue rather than with the whole problem in the abstract. His attitude with regard to the withholding of the vote from the Negro in the South was repeatedly and clearly defined, as, for example, in the year 1898 when South Carolina and Mississippi so amended their own suffrage laws as to exclude nineteen-twentieths of their Negro inhabitants from the right to vote. In Louisiana agitation developed during that year to exclude the colored voter from the polls there. Washington decided to take action. In careful consultation with the leading Negro editor, T. Thomas Fortune, and with Emmett Scott, he drafted a letter on February 19, 1898. Scott took this to the constitutional convention in Louisiana and placed it in the hands of the suffrage committee, as well as on the desk of the editors of the leading daily papers and of the Associated Press, which gave parts of it national publicity. The daily papers published it in full and wrote favorable editorial comment. The main points of the letter ran thus:

The Negro agrees with you that it is necessary to the salvation of the South that restriction be put upon the ballot. . . . I want to suggest that no State in the South can make a law that will provide an opportunity or temptation for an ignorant white man to vote and withhold the same opportunity from an ignorant colored man, without injuring both men. . . . Any law controlling the ballot, that is not absolutely just to both races, will work more permanent injury to the whites than to the blacks.

The Negro does not object to an educational or property test, but let the law be so clear that no one clothed with state authority will be tempted to perjure and degrade himself by putting one interpretation upon it for the white man and another for the black man. Study the history of the South, and you will find that, where there has been the most dishonesty in the matter of voting, there you will find today the lowest moral condition of both races.

First, there was the temptation to act wrongly with the Negro's ballot. From that it was an easy step to dishonesty with the white man's ballot, to the carrying of concealed weapons, to the murder of a Negro, and then to the murder of a white man and then to lynching. I entreat you not to pass such a law as will prove an eternal millstone about the neck of your children.

Passing to the constructive side of the problem, he went on:

I beg of you, further, that in the degree that you close the ballot-box against the ignorant, you open the schoolhouse. . . . Let the very best educational opportunities be provided for both races; and add to this the enactment of an election law that shall be incapable of unjust discrimination, at the same time providing that in proportion as the ignorant secure education, property and character they will be given the right of citizenship. Any other course will take from one-half your citizens interest in the State, and hope and ambition to become intelligent producers and taxpayers—to become useful and virtuous citizens. Any other course will tie the white citizens of Louisiana to a body of death.

The press both in Louisiana and throughout America was virtually unanimous in favor of this policy. However, the group in control of the convention forced the discriminatory amendment through, so that Louisiana sank to the level of South Carolina and Mississippi.

Later, in 1900, some members of the legislature in Georgia fomented a similar agitation. Booker Washington traveled to Atlanta to resist the movement. Clark Howell of the *Atlanta Constitution*, the powerful daily newspaper, published an interview with him. "I cannot think," he said, "that there is any large number of white people in the South so ignorant or so poor that they cannot get education and property enough to enable them to stand the test by the side of the Negro in these respects. . . . It is unfair to blame the Negro for not preparing himself for citizenship by acquiring intelligence.

and then when he does get education and property, to pass a law that can be so operated as to prevent him from being a citizen, even though he may be a large taxpayer." Booker Washington's effort was successful and the legislature voted down its anti-Negro members by 137 to 3. The open letter to the Louisiana constitutional convention and the interview at Atlanta were published as a pamphlet and widely distributed.

To condemn lynching at a distance is easy; to do so as a Negro in a city where a mob of white people in frenzy is howling in the streets on its way to lynch Negroes calls for cool courage. Washington's friends begged him to cancel his engagements to speak in Jacksonville, Florida, at a time when racial friction was intense on account of a horrible murder by two Negro perverts. He replied that the perilous situation made it all the more vital that he should go. As he and his friends were being driven to the hall in Jacksonville to address a mixed audience, an excited gang of white men stopped one car and demanded furiously that Booker Washington should be handed over to them. Finding that the occupant of the car was a Negro of their own city whom they respected, they let him pass. If the occupant had been Booker Washington it is difficult to see what would have prevented his being lynched. As he was speaking to that mixed audience of white and colored citizens, the howls of the white mob, who had just heard that the murderers had been arrested, could be heard in the hall. Washington's friends were horrified when he launched into a scorching denunciation of lynching, concluding with an appeal for harmonious feeling between the races. His courage was justified, as it was repeatedly on other similar occasions. Instead of uproar and riot, as his friends had feared, his views met with enthusiastic applause from white and colored alike.

He revealed his unflinching courage and intuitive psycho-

logical insight in many actions like that at Atlanta, Georgia, when a maddened white rabble, frustrated in their struggle to lynch a Negro criminal, set a whole Negro area of the city in flames and slew many innocent folk. Booker Washington was in New England at the time, but sped South at once, assembled the terror-stricken Negroes and braced them by his speech and action. Heading straight to the mayor and his council, he asked for and received guarantees of compensation and safeguards. Invading the office of the governor of Georgia, he enlisted his authority in assembling a group of leaders, who at once framed a statesmanlike plan for both immediate and long-term action that was successful in preventing any large-scale repetition of the terrible incident which had caused his intervention. His swift constructive championship, thus daringly exercised at the core of catastrophe, made calamity the steppingstone to long-term benefit.

Again and again he came back with grim persistence to the root of race-antagonism and to that path of patient persistent education along which its cure must be sought and can be reached. In Lyman Abbott's powerful weekly, *The Outlook*, for March 14, 1914, Booker Washington told the ghastly story that ended in a crazed white mob shooting two Negro boys full of bullet-holes and burning their bodies in the public street of a Mississippi city.

A few weeks ago three of the most prominent white men in Mississippi were shot and killed by two colored boys. Investigation brought to light that the boys were rough and crude, that they had never been to school—hence that they were densely ignorant. While no one had taught these boys the use of books, someone had taught them, as mere children, the use of cocaine and whisky. In a mad fit, when their minds and bodies were filled with cheap whisky and cocaine, these two ignorant boys created a 'reign of murder,' in the course of which three white men, four colored men, and one colored woman met death.

Washington went on to dig deeper into the reason why that kind of crime and consequent lynching was more frequent in a state like Mississippi. He pointed out that only thirty-six per cent of the colored boys and girls of that state at that time were provided with any schooling. He pointed to another state with, at that time, an even worse record, South Carolina, where some counties spent twenty dollars a year per head for the education of the white children and three dollars for each Negro boy and girl; and showing that throughout that state in all the rural areas the school term for colored children ran only from two to four months a year. These he pointed out were "breeding spots for ignorance, crime and filth which the nation will sooner or later have to reckon with."

In a passage that may be regarded as a classical interpretation of his process, Washington answered the question, "In relation to the government, what is the fundamental mission and what should be the spirit of such an institution as the Tuskegee Institute?"

As I conceive it, a part of the mission of this school is expressed in the purpose and determination to assist the race in laying such a gradual and permanent foundation in right living, through the accumulation of property, industry, thrift, skill, education of all character, moral and religious habits, and all that which means our usefulness to the community in which we abide, that naturally, logically and sympathetically we shall make ourselves grow into the full and rightful employment and intelligent use of the privileges and rewards of citizenship.

This oblique reference to the political rights of the Negro to vote was driven home in the same address by a prophetic warning, the force of which has been augmented in the testing of subsequent decades.

If this country is to continue to be a Republic its task will never be completed as long as seven or eight millions of its people are



in a large degree regarded as aliens and are without voice or interest in the welfare of the Government. Such a course will not merely inflict a great injustice upon these millions of people, but the nation will pay the price of finding the genius and form of its government changed, not perhaps in name, but certainly in reality, and because of this the world will say that free government is a failure.

It is clear, therefore, that Booker Washington persistently made his voice heard in advocacy of absolute equality between colored and white in respect of the ballot; and that he was influential in southern areas to which the more belligerent voices did not penetrate. Always, however, his words echoed the principle, "Come, let us reason together"; a policy which some critics, Negro and white, believe to be doomed to frustration as contrasted with the more pugnacious call to direct action.

He always came back in this ministry of interpretation to the theme of the inescapable interdependence of the two races. When the colored people of America were celebrating their "fifty years of freedom" in 1913, he restated this conviction in these words:

It is just as true in America and in the South, as it is elsewhere, that a nation or a people cannot gain the highest success, even in a material sense, when one large portion of the population is so helpless and so inefficient as to be a burden, rather than a help, to the other portion. One portion of the community cannot be contented and happy when the other portion of the community is bitter, discontented and miserable. One portion of the community cannot retain its refinement, its purity and its moral standards of living when another portion of the people is vicious, criminal and neglected. Just as the degradation of one class or one race means eventually the dragging down and degradation of the other, so it is true, on the other hand, that the elevation and emancipation of one class or race means the elevation and emancipation of the other.

If I were asked, then, what had been accomplished for freedom in this larger sense, during the past fifty years, I should say that progress had been made in three general directions: First, in the gradual improvement of the masses of the Negro people in the matter of industry and thrift, in the owning of land, in the building of homes, in the establishing of the masses on the land and in the fundamental industries and trades.

Second, in the reduction of the illiteracy of the race to the extent that, whereas in 1863 not more than five per cent perhaps of the Negro population could read and write, now almost seventy per cent can do so.

Third, in the gradual growth of better and more wholesome relations between the races in the South, and in the wider recognition by the members of both races that the welfare of the one is, in the long run, bound up with that of the other.

Washington's program in securing financial support was far more adventurous than that of Hampton through the very nature of the constitution of Tuskegee, as well as through his own character. The support of Hampton in the nineteenth century, from General Armstrong's entry into the principalship in 1868, stemmed mainly from its founders, the supporters of the American Missionary Association. Booker at Tuskegee, on the other hand, had only the two thousand dollars a year for teachers' salaries voted by the state legislature of Alabama. If he was to build and expand he must launch out constantly in vigorous quest of funds. The highly productive reservoir of help from the wealthy idealists in the North was, as we have seen, first tapped for Tuskegee in its very first year by the first woman principal, Olivia Davidson. He eagerly seized and, with her encouragement and guidance, developed that line of approach. One among many uncounted examples of personal conquest followed a visit early in his career to one of the then titanic railway magnates, Collis P. Huntington, who said, "Here are two dollars for your school" in response

to his request. Unruffled by this meager response he set himself during the next twelve years or so to convince Huntington that Tuskegee was worth substantial help. A steadily rising sequence of gifts culminated, a few months before the death of Huntington, in a check for fifty thousand dollars toward the Tuskegee endowment fund. Huntington Hall was named to commemorate the interest of Mr. and Mrs. Huntington.

The most stable source of financial backing was found in philanthropic foundations created by men and women of good will, southern as well as northern. Booker Washington was active in the starting of a number of these. The Peabody Education Fund, however, had already been established when he was a small boy, immediately after Emancipation. George Foster Peabody in 1867 set apart a large sum as a perpetual endowment "in gratitude to God for His blessings" to be used for the education of black and white in the neglected South and Southwest. Similarly, John F. Slater in 1882, just after Tuskegee had started, made over to a board of ten trustees a million dollars to be used "in the uplifting of the lately emancipated population of the Southern States and their posterity, by conferring on them the blessings of Christian education—education in which the instruction of the mind in the common branches of secular learning shall be associated with training in just notions of duty toward God and man in the light of the Holy Scriptures." This Fund, within forty years of its foundation, spent over three million dollars for this cause. To Booker Washington the aims of these two Funds were identical with those of Tuskegee, and he was not slow to link them with its special projects.

He actually took part in creating other funds still more directly related to his expansion work. When he and Hollis B. Frissell, the president of Hampton, visited the Philadelphia Quaker, Anna T. Jeanes, a few years before her death in

1907, they found that her mind was not on Hampton or Tuskegee. "Others," she said to them, "have given to the large schools; if I could, I should like to help the little country schools." Starting by giving each man ten thousand dollars for the salaries of rural teachers and for the improvement of their buildings, she later gave each a hundred thousand more, and in 1907 gave, as we have seen, one million dollars "for the purpose of assisting in the southern United States community, country and rural schools for the great class of Negroes to whom the rural and community schools are alone available." Booker Washington was chairman of the executive committee of this fund. His executive director of the Jeanes Fund, James Hardy Dillard, was a distinguished southern gentleman of the old school, reared in the classical tradition of the South, and an influential member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was of greater help to Booker Washington's lifework than any other southern white man, in that he put the power of his authority against the critical attitude of the South toward Negro education and in favor of winning its positive support.

Another leading Episcopalian, Caroline Phelps Stokes, made a bequest which, as incorporated in the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and with the active coöperation of Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, has given statesmanlike and farsighted contributions to the education of the United States Negro and of the African peoples. As we have seen, Julius Rosenwald's generous plans, framed at Chicago in collaboration with Washington, resulted in the building of many thousands of new and well-planned rural schoolhouses; as well as gifts to members of the Tuskegee staff to encourage them in their work.

Washington meanwhile developed an almost uncanny skill in winning for his projects the enthusiastic support of outstanding business and professional men in New York and the middle eastern states. Like a skilled mining engineer he was

alert to catch sight of a fresh "lead," and would follow it industriously. These business men were especially zealous to help him because they saw in him the highest executive ability harnessed with singleness of mind to a cause with which they sympathized but to which they could not spare the time to give continuous active service. From such men came much of the money for the endowments with which Booker Washington underpinned the work of Tuskegee. He also secured letters from men like President Taft at the White House for publication in appeals for these endowments.

A few conspicuous examples will illustrate the astonishing lengths to which their enthusiastic devotion to Booker Washington's work led them. Robert C. Ogden, organizer and manager of John Wanamaker's store in New York City and a member of the General Education Board, worked hand-in-glove with Seth Low, mayor of New York and the principal force in modernizing Columbia University, who became chairman of the Tuskegee board of trustees. These two invited a number of their influential friends to Tuskegee every year. Backed by the multimillionaire, John Wanamaker, they would underwrite the cost of a special train composed of three or four luxurious Pullman cars to take these men from New York, Philadelphia, and other cities all the way to Tuskegee and back.

This introduced the sorely-needed backing of notable writers and editors. For example, on one of these trips, in 1902, came Oswald Garrison Villard who, through his large journalistic influence and vivid writing and enthusiasm for Negro education, was an ideal publicist. His drastic criticism in later years of Washington's policy enters into the appraisal of that policy in chapter XVIII. He inherited from his fiery grandfather, the abolitionist orator, William Lloyd Garrison, a burning zeal for the destruction of all forms of discrimination

against colored peoples. Born in Germany in 1872 and educated at Harvard, this cultured northerner became permanently linked with the South through this trip to Tuskegee in 1902, for he met in Georgia a Kentucky girl whom he married the following year.

Another invaluable ally in publicity was Lyman Abbott, editor of *The Outlook*, a weekly periodical that at that time had unexcelled influence throughout the United States in guiding and shaping idealistic conviction. Among intellectuals who gave statesmanlike aid to Washington's plans was that expert on universities, Wallace Buttrick, who became the guiding mind of the General Education Board from 1902 onwards.

The example of Ogden, Wanamaker, and Low in hiring a special train inspired Julius Rosenwald of Chicago to bring large parties of his friends among the business men of the Middle West by special train to Tuskegee. In general these were men who had swiftly risen to wealth from humble beginnings. Having little cultural background they were profoundly ignorant of the South, and in them the fires of antagonism left by the Civil War still smoldered. They knew nothing of the educated Negro or of any of his institutions. To spend some days at Tuskegee watching its working at close quarters opened new horizons to them, and secured substantial gifts from a considerable number.

In these and other ways Booker Washington not only secured the financial foundation essential to carrying forward Tuskegee Institute itself and the widely ramified extension developments, but also set in motion radiating influences for the enlightenment of leading citizens in different parts of the United States. The photographs of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in 1906 give a characteristic picture of these influences. The speakers included the Secretary of War, Wil-

liam H. Taft, later President, Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard University, Andrew Carnegie, the multimillionaire and founder of numerous public libraries, J. G. Phelps Stokes, a younger millionaire giving his whole time to work for good citizenship and clean politics, Robert C. Ogden, Lyman Abbott, George McAneny, president of the Civic Association of America, and Hollis B. Frissell, the white principal of Hampton Institute. In all this development Booker Washington was almost quixotically scrupulous in refusing offers to smooth his own path. A colleague of his informed the author that Carnegie had proposed that he should give an endowment of six hundred thousand dollars, the proceeds of which should be used solely for Washington's personal support, and that the Principal uncompromisingly rejected it. This sum given by Carnegie was used for research, literature, and other projects.

No statesman in finance would, in this changing world, anchor the security of a great and growing institution to funds and personal gifts dependent upon the continued wealth and loyalty of a relatively few rich men and women. Persistently Booker Washington therefore approached the alumni of the Institute, often for specific projects; and thus, not only brought numerous small amounts into the budget, but sustained the active coöperation of Tuskegee graduates. Wherever possible he also secured the financial support of the state of Alabama and of the Federal Government for Tuskegee's extension schemes.

As a record of sheer achievement in quickening the interest of white and black, North and South, the cold figures of finance are eloquent. As Anson Phelps Stokes says in his *Tuskegee Institute: the first fifty years*, which expands the Founder's Day Address that he delivered in 1931:

When the Founder died, in 1915, he left an institution which he—an ex-slave—had created out of absolutely nothing except the promise of \$2,000 a year for teachers' salaries. He left it with an endowment of approximately two million dollars, with property worth over a million and a half, and with an annual budget of nearly three hundred thousand dollars.

The significance of those figures lies not simply in their magnitude as contrasted with the penurious beginnings, but much more in the expression, by men and women of both races and from the South as well as from the North, of confidence in and even sacrificial enthusiasm for Booker Washington's consistent program of interracial harmony and full national coöperation founded upon educational advance and economic elevation.



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INTERPRETATION THROUGH SPEECH AND WRITING

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Oratory loomed so large in Booker Washington's ministry of interpretation, and—measured by his influence on attitudes and by his mastery of the English language—he ranks so high in the history of public speech, that it may be well to pause to ask how he acquired his skill and achieved his effects. He says himself that, as an illiterate child, stories of the oratory of Frederick Douglass first inspired his desire to read. "I heard so much about Frederick Douglass when I was a boy," he writes in *My Larger Education*, "that one of the reasons why I wanted to go to school and learn to read was that I might read for myself what he had written and said."

The value of Frederick Douglass's oratory in arousing a people out of despair and lethargy cannot be questioned. He was a bugle sounding a reveille to battle. His whole career as an orator started from his accidentally lighting upon a book of speeches by Chatham, Sheridan, Fox, and the younger Pitt. He discovered there the witchery of eloquence, and read speeches in favor of the American colonists and their self-government, spoken in the British House of Commons with fervor and brilliance. This governed the essential message of Douglass: he was the apostle of freedom rather than the advocate of a coherent program or policy of education or sustained social action. His lack in this respect is illustrated in the following authentic story concerning a colored woman

who, when she escaped from slavery, gave herself in Boston the strange name of Sojourner Truth. She was, Dr. DuBois says, "a tall, gaunt, unsmiling sybil weighed down with the woe of the world," and with an unflinching determination "founded on unwavering faith in ultimate good." She was at a meeting in Faneuil Hall, Boston, when Frederick Douglass spoke. She sat grimly in the front row, Wendell Phillips records, facing the speaker. Douglass gave a panorama of the wrongs suffered by the Negro race. Becoming more and more impassioned, he cried out: "The Negro has no hope of justice from the whites, no possible hope save in his own right arm. It must come to blood. The Negroes must fight for themselves." In the tense silence that followed as Douglass sat down, the deep vibrant voice of Sojourner Truth went to every corner of the hall: "Frederick, is God dead?"

Booker Washington set himself to cultivate the gift of potent speech, but in support, as we have seen, of a fundamentally different policy from that of Douglass. In one of his rare moments of self-revelation in regard to public speech, he said, "I make it a rule never to go before an audience, on any occasion, without asking the blessing of God upon what I want to say. I always make it a rule to make especial preparation for each separate address. I care little how what I am saying is going to sound in the newspapers, or to another audience, or to an individual. At the time, the audience before me absorbs all my sympathy, thought, and energy."

One curious characteristic, frequently remarked upon by reporters, was that Washington nearly always held a pencil in his right hand when speaking, using it at times almost as a small baton to emphasize his points. Members of his family have told the author that this dated back to an early experience when he overcame his extreme nervousness on beginning to speak by holding a pencil in his hand.

As we read reports by journalists of the effect of Washington's speeches, we repeatedly discover that the point at which he fused a vast crowd of people into a common mind and brought them to their feet in rapturous applause was when he used a simile to clinch a logical argument with a single unforgettable picture. The classic example was at Atlanta when he cried: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." His parable, "If you hold a man down in the ditch you must go down into the ditch yourself," has clung like a burr to the disturbed conscience of men who have sustained preëminence of one racial group over another by repression and exploitation. Examples of pungent phrases still frequently quoted are: "No man shall drag me down by making me hate him"; and "No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem"; "One might as well talk of stopping the flow of the Mississippi River as the progress of a race that is securing property, education, and Christian character"; and "There are two ways of exerting one's strength; one is pushing down, the other is pulling up." The naïve simplicity of many of his sayings, with their undertone of humor, fitted them exactly for his audiences and for passing on from mouth to mouth.

His normal practice was, first, to jot down in bare outline the course of his proposed argument with a note of the illustrations to be used, then to dictate the speech in full to his office secretary. When the speech had been typed, he read it through and made such additions or changes as occurred to him or to his wife or colleagues. He then incorporated these modifications in his first outline, and carried that outline with him to the platform as a memory aid; although normally his powerful memory and his intense interest in his theme made its use almost unnecessary. That he ignored his

notes is shown by an appraisal of his oratory made by an anonymous English writer:

It was quite unstudied, or, rather, it gave the impression of being so. There were no pauses or repetitions, no fumbling for words or phrases. The form and matter could not have been better after laborious preparation, and yet the delivery had all the charm of unpremeditated ease. For nearly three-quarters of an hour Dr. Washington, without effort and without a single note, held the rapt attention of his audience, making even facts and figures appear not indigestible to the post-prandial appetite.

The versatility of his oratory is attested by the reports showing that he held the Alumni Banquet at Harvard University in the hollow of his hand for ninety minutes on the occasion of his receiving the honorary M.A. degree, and then went on to a mass meeting of fifteen hundred working Negroes who listened in rapt attention to what the reporter calls "his fatherly address to the people of his race. They laughed and wept by turns as he played upon the chords of their emotional natures. . . Deep 'Amens' thundered forth as the Negro orator voiced the naked truth."

A still more exacting test came when he addressed large audiences in the South composed of both whites and Negroes together. An Alabama newspaper, the *Montgomery Advertiser*, deep in the cotton belt, testifies that "He could talk to audiences composed of whites and blacks, hold them spell-bound with his simple oratory, excite no anger in any person before him, and yet not compromise his essential intellectual integrity."

During a period when lynching was rife and interracial tension was increasing to a dangerous degree, he made a statement which combined firm courage with tactical skill when speaking to a great audience of hardheaded business men in Georgia:

In several parts of the South—not in all, I am glad to say—there exist today conditions of uncertainty, fear, unrest and doubt among our people because of cruelties and injustices that have been perpetrated upon them. . . It is unreasonable for any community to expect that it can permit Negroes to be lynched or burned in the winter, and then have reliable Negro labor to raise cotton in the summer.

One effective method that he used in his steady work of reconciliation through interpretation was to move forward through a sequence of negatives so that he could bring home his final affirmation. A characteristic example is found in his Collis P. Huntington Memorial Address: "The solution of the problem is not in the abuse of the South by the North; not in condemning the Negro, nor in the Negro cursing the white man; not in colonization, not in deportation, not in amalgamation or extermination; but in honest, sympathetic coöperation between the races."

Alongside his public speaking, Booker Washington's work as an author must rank as equally influential in forwarding his interpretative work in the wider world beyond Tuskegee. He entered the field of authorship with deep reluctance and misgiving, and only under persistent pressure from friends whose judgment he trusted. It really began when the editors of the influential periodical, the *Outlook*, then directed by Lyman Abbott and Theodore Roosevelt, pressed him to write the story of his life to be published as a serial. He replied that the events of his life could not possibly be of interest to the general public. Under pressure he at last agreed to try to write it, although authorship was new to him. Even then he simply could not drive himself to start, being so convinced of the futility of the idea. A letter of vehement urgency from the editors drove him to snatch some hours in which to write the first chapter. His stenographer typed it and it only filled

three and a half pages. He sent this with a note lamenting its inadequacy. "I will send more tomorrow," he promised. The editors wrote praising the material and urging him on. Tired as he was, he wrote bits of his life story on torn envelopes and odd pieces of paper in the train, in hotel bedrooms between speeches, and in ten-minute intervals in his office work. Distressed by being forced to do this important piece of writing in broken fragments of time, his discomfort was increased by letters from the office of the *Outlook* pointing out that great gaps in the chronology made impossible blanks between chapters.

At last the story was completed in serial form and produced as a book, *Up from Slavery*. The author was bewildered by its reception. Its influence across the world became incalculable. After hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold in all parts of the English speaking world, the demand still continues. Asiatics in India were soon reading it in Hindustani, Latin Americans in Spanish, and western Europeans from the Atlantic to the Baltic were, in surprising numbers, reading it in French and German; while the blind followed the story in Braille. The causes of the immediate and sustained success are, first, that it is the unadorned, intimate narrative of the triumph of will and grit over seemingly impossible obstacles, not out of the distant past but in a career then still in its early stages of conquest; second, that it was the success story of a man not seeking his own enrichment but embracing in his objective all downtrodden peoples everywhere; third, that it was written in an English style unconsciously inspired by the constant reading of the English Bible and of Shakespeare; and, fourth, it became, for those reasons, a fascinating narrative, a Pilgrim's Progress revealing artlessly a personality in whom rugged strength and sensitive charm were one. None of his subsequent books made the interna-

tional appeal or exercised the grip of *Up from Slavery*. Written fifteen years before his death it leaves the reader ignorant of the creative activity of many of his best years, and naturally takes for granted conditions familiar to the American reader of that time but largely unknown to later generations. Written about himself, too, it necessarily is silent on many aspects of the man and his work. But the qualities that have been analyzed seem to give it permanent rank among the world's classics.

In the preparation of subsequent books Washington received a large measure of help from his Negro colleagues, Monroe Work and Emmett Scott, in the assembly and selection of material, as well as from Robert E. Park, a white friend from New England, whose labors made possible *The Man Farthest Down* and appreciably enriched *The Story of the Negro*. Nathan Hunt, son of an ex-slave woman, became his stenographic secretary. He had been educated in an Ohio village and later at college by the help of Quaker benefactors and proved so resourceful that, when the Principal was sent to Europe for the tour described in chapter XVII, Hunt went with him. This helped to make possible the writing of Washington's book, *The Man Farthest Down*. Its moving panorama of the life of the peasant across the middle of Europe from Belgium to Sicily opened the eyes of many readers to aspects of life on the Continent which are normally hidden from the reader of its political history and the traveler to its cathedrals, art galleries and palaces.

Other books by Booker Washington made their contemporary contribution to knowledge and opinion, but lack the qualities that make for permanence. His two volumes, *The Story of the Negro*, clearly owe much to the industry of his collaborators and, at the time, brought before a considerable public a perspective that was then lacking. Later ethnological

and archeological research in Africa, however, and closer analysis of the background of slavery, have relegated much of the work to the vast stores of outdated literature. On the other hand, other volumes, for instance, his *Character Building* and *My Larger Education*, have, for the historian of education, a permanent value in presenting his pioneer adventures in project education harnessed to the elevation of a depressed minority race in a nation that was itself in painful process of integration.

As a part of his interpretation of the Negro to the larger world he wrote numerous articles for popular magazines. The kind of subject that he handled and his method of preparation are suggested in a letter, dated February 6, 1907, addressed to a well-known Negro leader in Nashville, Tennessee, the Honorable J. T. Settle.

I am preparing an article for one of the older and well established magazines of this country upon the subject of Negro homes. I desire to make this as representative of the better class of homes among our people as it is possible. To accompany this article, I desire to give a brief account of the persons who live in these houses. Will you kindly send me a brief account of your life and at the same time, a good picture of your home? I should like you to cover the following points: Age, early life and associations, parentage, schooling, and reasons, as far as you understand them, for your success in life. Any anecdote, pithy statement or incident that you may care to make that will suggest the difficulties that our people meet either because of lack of opportunities, or because of obstacles will be valuable to my purpose. Let me add that you cannot be too personal or too circumstantial in the statements you make.

All Booker Washington's authorship, public speech, and the contacts made upon his tours had as one continuous aim the securing of financial support for Tuskegee and its ever-widening extension work as part of his comprehensive program of



raising the status of his race as an integral part of the American nation in a harmonious world. He had no false shame in regard to asking for money for these objects. Indeed, in his view, he was conferring a favor on a man by releasing his wealth to forward aims that widened the perspective and enlarged the spirit of the giver. He would have agreed with John R. Mott's definition of money as "an extension of personality," and he rejoiced to aid men in the exercise of that function for a supremely creative cause.

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RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

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The earliest contact that Booker Washington had with the Federal Government came in 1894 when, as has been recorded, he successfully pleaded with a Congressional committee for a large Federal grant in aid of the Atlanta Cotton Exposition of 1895. His epoch-marking speech at that Exposition brought a striking letter from President Cleveland, and the President later visited the Exposition and spent an hour under Washington's guidance in the Negro building. From that time onward President Cleveland continually showed his friendship to Washington both by personal acts of helpfulness and by taking numerous steps to forward the interests of Tuskegee Institute.

During the Presidencies of Roosevelt and Taft, from 1901 until 1913, Booker Washington's contacts with the White House on behalf of the colored people were constant and constructive. Both Presidents called upon him for advice, accepted his judgment, and trusted his discretion. This was by no means simply in matters of detail. They invited him to offer suggestions as to the subject matter of Presidential speeches in so far as these were concerned with race-relations; they asked for his guidance in handling such international affairs as affected the African race;<sup>1</sup> they looked to him to make them aware of substantial injustices suffered by the colored population in education, in travel accommodation, and

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<sup>1</sup> As in the Liberian crisis. (see Chapter XVI).

in other ways; and they asked for his suggestions toward the appointment to governmental positions of trust not only of Negroes but of white men who would advance the progress of the South.

Colleagues who worked with Washington during the years from 1901 to 1908 say that the extraordinary intimacy and easy working of his contacts with President Roosevelt sprang from their common qualities of directness, capacity to arrive swiftly at correct decisions when faced by a crisis, courage combined with shrewdness, a passion for getting things done, complete confidence in the sincerity of each other, and genuine belief in the right of all races to equal opportunity.

On the very day on which Theodore Roosevelt took the oath of office at Buffalo as President McKinley's successor, Washington received a letter from him (September 14, 1901) written in his own hand, asking him to meet the new President. Mr. Roosevelt wanted to talk over with Washington projects that both had discussed years earlier. In a memorandum dictated for his files, Washington reports:

This plan had lain matured in his mind for years, and as soon as the opportunity came he acted upon it.

When I received this letter from Mr. Roosevelt, I confess that it caused me some grave misgivings. I felt I must consider seriously the question whether I should allow myself to be drawn into a kind of activity I had definitely determined to keep away from. But here was the letter with its suggestion which it seemed to me I could not lightly put aside, no matter what my personal wishes or feelings might be. Shortly after Mr. Roosevelt became established in the White House I went there to see him and we spent the greater part of an evening in talk concerning the South. In this conversation he emphasized, in particular, two points. First, he stated that wherever he appointed a white man to office in the South he wished him to be the very highest type of native

Southern white man; one in whom the whole country had faith. He repeated and emphasized his determination to appoint such a type of man regardless of political influences or political consequences.

Then, he stated to me quite frankly, that he did not propose to appoint a large number of colored people to office in any part of the South, but that he did propose to do two things which had not been done before that time, at least not to the extent and with the definite purpose he had in mind. Wherever he did appoint a colored man to office in the South he said he wanted him to be a man not only of ability but of character; a man also who had the confidence of his white and colored neighbors. He said he did not propose to appoint a colored man to office simply for the purpose of temporary political expediency. He added that while he proposed to appoint fewer colored men to office in the South, he did propose to put a certain number of colored men of high character and ability in office in the Northern States. He said that he had never been able to see any good reason why colored men should be put in office in the Southern States and not in the Northern States as well.

Washington's correspondence shows that, on his own initiative, he repeatedly brought to Roosevelt's attention trends of opinion that required correction, and injustices to the Negro that called for amendment. For instance, in January 1906 he sent confidentially to the President cuttings from the *New York Herald* which affirmed that

you have inaugurated a new policy which means the removal of all colored men from office in the South. This same dispatch was sent to several southern papers. The spreading of this falsehood in this manner has caused a feeling of bitterness among many colored people, and I am wondering whether it would not be wise to give out a line from the White House denying it. I appreciate something of how trying it must be to meet such criticism in the face of all you have done or said in the interests of the race. . . . If you cared to make such a statement and wished me to look over it before you gave it out, I should be glad to do so.

Pressure was constantly exercised upon Washington by Negro friends to put forward the names of their friends for office. He consistently resisted this at the cost of much criticism. Many letters of firm but kindly refusal are found in his files. On the other hand, he not infrequently forwarded to the President names of men of whose capacity and character he was fully convinced. The following is an example of such a commendation given to a man of the opposite party from that of the President:

To the President.

May 30, 1904.

This is to say that in my opinion Judge Osceola Kyle is pre-eminently fitted for a judgeship in Panama, and I believe if you can see your way clear to appoint him you will be putting in a responsible position a man of the type of Judge Thomas G. Jones of Alabama. Judge Kyle stands for the very highest type of citizenship, and has the confidence of the people of all races and parties in Alabama. While he is a Democrat, he is a man of the highest and most unimpeachable character, noted for his courage and sense of justice. He also served in the Spanish-American War. If necessary I shall be willing to answer any further questions as to his fitness for the position.

In regard to "Jim Crow" segregation in the South Booker Washington carried on a sustained fight. He made his first point of attack not upon segregation in itself, but upon the scandalous inequality in the character of the accommodation provided for the Negro. He wrote as follows to President Roosevelt on March 23, 1908:

I am very anxious that if anything is done regarding the improvement of the railroad accommodations for colored people in the South, the first public utterance bearing upon it initiate with you rather than with the Interstate Commerce Commission. Perhaps a letter from you to the Interstate Commerce Commission might accomplish the purpose that I have in mind.

In case you write such a letter, I think it well for you to keep in mind the following points:

First, the colored people as a whole are opposed to the principle of separation, and it would be unfortunate for you to say anything that would seem to endorse the principle of separation. Since separation has been provided for in all of the Southern States, you could insist that the accommodations be equal in convenience and in comfort for the same money.

Enclosed I send you an exact extract covering the Alabama law. It is practically the same in all of the Southern States.

As I stated, I think the safest course for you to pursue would be to emphasize the fact that where separation is made the colored people receive the same treatment for the same money that the white people do. The principal grounds of complaint at present among the colored people are as follows:

The cars are often filthy. The compartments for colored people are not only filthy, but are in many cases too small, lacking in proper ventilation. The news boy takes up a large portion of the space with his goods. In many cases all the colored people, including women and children, are required to pass through the white men's smoking compartment in order to get into the part of the coach reserved for colored people. In many other cases no smoking room whatever is provided for colored men. In most cases the waiting rooms provided for colored people are filthy and not given anything like the same kind of attention that is given those provided for white people.

Five days later Theodore Roosevelt sent to Booker Washington a draft of a letter to the Interstate Commission strongly pressing upon them with Presidential authority the necessity of improving traveling accommodation for colored people. It was returned to him with a few of the points strengthened and was dispatched.

The Atlanta Race Riot of 1906, which sent a shock through the nation, together with other outbreaks of lynching, led Washington to suggest to the President in a letter dated October 18 of that year that he might in his annual message to

Congress make a statement that would show him to be "working in the same direction that the best Southern white people are working. Anything that would stir up sectional questions would be harmful. . ."

The most furious debate that ever raged around Booker Washington arose over an incident from which none of the participants anticipated any trouble. It can most succinctly be reported by quoting a note written thirty years later by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt in answer to an inquiry: "An entry in my diary for Tuesday, October 16, 1901, notes 'Mr. Booker Washington at dinner.' "

The President had asked Washington to come to the White House to discuss some projected appointments and other matters. The talk took longer than had been anticipated. Mr. Roosevelt, as was his custom in such cases, asked him to dine with the family. This he did, and their discussions were continued in the evening. In the next day's routine news statement from the White House the bare fact was obscurely announced in the local press. A few days later a southern newspaper correspondent lifted it out of its obscurity and telegraphed it to his paper. For days and even weeks the southern papers sent out shrieks of fury at both the President and Booker Washington. One paradoxical element in the situation lay in the fact that the southern papers had been loudly praising the President for appointing, on Booker Washington's recommendation, a white Democrat to a Federal judgeship.

Both Roosevelt and Washington, in consequence of that dinner, received many threats against their lives. Emmett Scott's desk at Tuskegee had a drawer full of threatening letters. The Tuskegee campus had to be policed. Washington's colleagues some forty years later declared that they never could forget the nightmare tension. Nothing, however, would persuade Washington to hide himself. By six in the morning

after his return from the capital he was, as one of his agricultural colleagues told the author, "out here on his horse going round the farm."

At that time an unknown Negro was hurt jumping off a train before it reached Tuskegee station. As the town had no hospital for Negroes he was taken to the Institute hospital, where the doctor and nurses cared for him. Not until he was cured and had left the town did he confess that a group of white men in Louisiana had hired him to go to Tuskegee to assassinate Washington, but that, in the care of those doctors and nurses on Booker Washington's staff, he became so ashamed of himself that he could not carry out his commission.

Theodore Roosevelt characteristically wrote in a postscript to a letter to Washington: "By the way, don't worry about *me*; it will all come right in time, and if I have helped by ever so little 'the ascent of man,' I am more than satisfied." Emmett Scott remarks that "Booker Washington, with all his philosophy and capacity for rising above the personal, was probably more deeply pained by this affair than by any other in his whole career. His pain, however, was almost solely on Mr. Roosevelt's account," that he "should suffer all this abuse and even vilification on his account."

At the end of President Roosevelt's term of office, when Taft was elected President, but before he had taken office, he asked for Booker Washington's advice and guidance. Washington wrote to him on November 30, 1908:

It was very kind of you to send me word that you wish to consult with me fully and freely on all racial matters during your administration. I assure you I shall be glad to place myself at your service at all times. I want no office whatever. I simply desire to serve you in any capacity that you may desire at any time. The greatest satisfaction that has come to me during the administration of President Roosevelt is the fact that perhaps I have been of some



service to him in helping to raise the standard of the colored people, in helping him to see that men holding office under him were men of character and ability, and in that way I am sure that President Roosevelt has helped the whole race. If I can in any degree serve you in the same manner I shall be most happy.

President Taft's interest in and admiration for Booker Washington and his work were of long standing and were based on first-hand examination of his policy and practice at Tuskegee. He had expressed his admiration publicly after his return from a period of government administration in the Philippine Islands, where he had had some experience of relationships with another race. At Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Taft had said, on May 22, 1908, at the end of a Convocation speech to the assembled colored students:

I believe in and am deeply interested in the success of the doctrine which Booker Washington is inculcating . . . that the way for the colored race to make a path for themselves to success is to show not only how useful but how indispensable they are to the community of which they are part; and that as they become more and more valuable to that community, the wrongs which they have suffered and the disadvantages under which they have labored will disappear . . . because their disappearance will be to the pecuniary and general interest of all elements in the country.

No doctrine with regard to the advancement of the Negro in America is more hotly contested than is this belief that an economic and cultural rise in standards of living will inevitably bring equality of political, economic, and educational opportunity. Booker Washington did not state it in the absolute form in which Taft here interprets him; but he did hold consistently that agricultural and industrial skill and hard work, combined with acquisition of property, were an essential foundation upon which positive political advance could be confidently undertaken. This problem is discussed more fully in later chapters.

During that same year (November 1908) Booker Washington, at Mr. Taft's request, drew up a confidential memorandum to suggest a statement of policy in an important speech which the President-elect was to make at a dinner in honor of Walter Page, American Ambassador to Great Britain. Careful reading of this confidential document should give pause to critics of Booker Washington who contend that he failed to press for higher education of the Negro or for the suffrage:

No sincere friend of the South will advocate a policy that does not aim to maintain and increase relations of friendship and mutual helpfulness between the two races. The very worst enemy of his own race is the man, either black or white, who needlessly stirs up bitterness and racial strife. Just now there are two fundamental matters which concern the Negro and are important to the South, in regard to which there should be no misunderstanding. On both of these points I am in perfect accord with the wisest and most patriotic people of the South and throughout the country.

First, as to the matter of education. The Negro is an American citizen, and as such he has a right to expect education at the hands of the state or community in which he lives, the same as any other citizen. But if this were not sufficient reason for educating the Negro every consideration of policy urges it. The very worst enemy of the South is the man who advocates a policy of keeping the Negro in ignorance. Whatever he may be in the future, at present the Negro is the main dependence of the South for personal service and for labor especially in agriculture. It is impossible for the South to develop its resources in competition with other sections of the country and of the world, if the laboring and producing class of the South is not as intelligent as the laboring and producing classes of every other part of the world. Wherever ignorance comes into competition with intelligence, intelligence wins and ignorance loses. At a time when the whole world is every year demanding of its servants and its laborers greater skill and more intelligence it is an insult for anyone to intimate that the South is going to set a lower standard, or that it is going

to be forever content with crude, ignorant, and unskilled labor, either on the farm or elsewhere.

The wisest and most farseeing men of both races agree that what is needed is that all children, regardless of race, receive a public school education and that the masses have this education reinforced, as far as possible, by thorough and practical industrial training, especially agricultural training for the rural districts. Since the Negro, in a very large degree, is dependent upon his own people for ministers, doctors, teachers, and professional men, the Negro should not only have industrial training, but academic, college, and university training as well, especially those who are to become the advisers and leaders of the race.

The second point to which I want to refer concerns the ballot in the South. Practically every Southern State, within recent years, has adopted a new constitution with the view of restricting the use of the ballot. Whatever may have been the excuse or the necessity for the methods used to reassert the political ascendancy of the white man in the government of the Southern States during and immediately after the period of reconstruction, we all know the demoralizing effect of that period of fraud and violence.

Since the laws have been reconstructed there is no longer any excuse or necessity for dishonesty, no reason why the present generation should not carry out, in letter and in spirit, the provisions of the new constitution. To put the matter plainly, since under the provisions of these new constitutions, for a long while, at least, only a small proportion of Negroes can vote, it is important that these constitutions be applied with equal and exact justice to black and white alike. The Negro who can meet the requirements which the law lays down as to property, intelligence, or of good character, should not only be permitted but encouraged to vote. It would be a great mistake for the white people of the South to behave in such a way toward the Negro as to convince him that they opposed his highest interests. Give the Negro justice in this as in every other matter and he will have an incentive for high and useful life.

Speaking of my own political party, I ought to make it plain here and now, that I have no sympathy with any section of the party in any part of the country that would keep the Negro out

of party councils and conventions on account of his race. The Republican Party cannot afford to seek votes in any section of the country at the price of injustice to any portion of our population, regardless of its color.

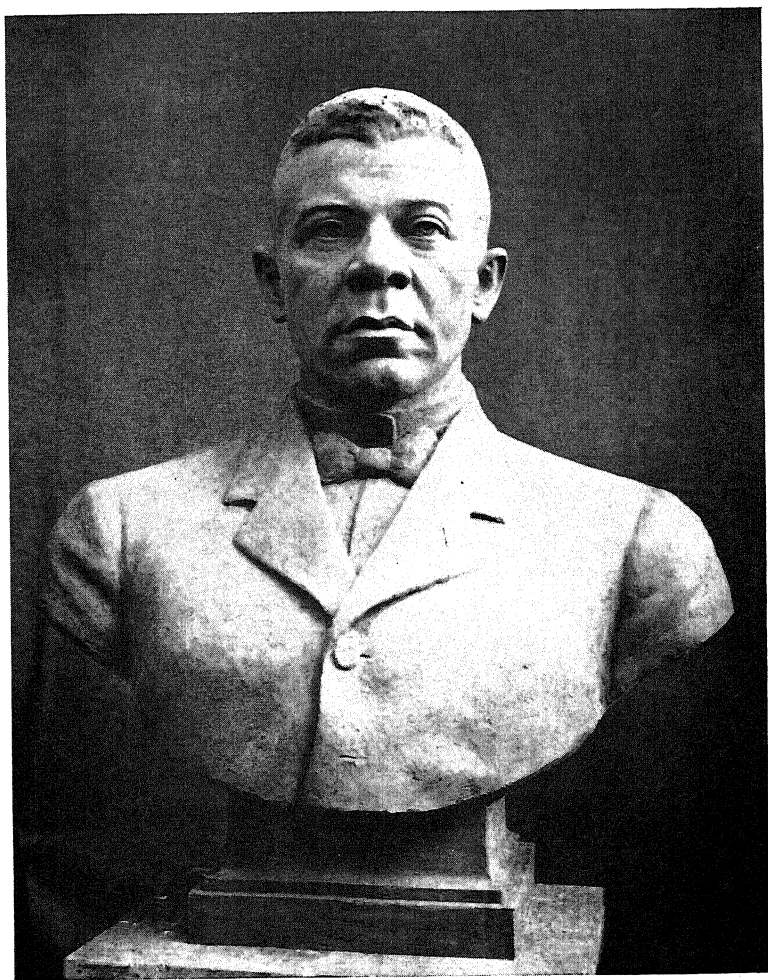
The supreme good of the Negro at the present time, the thing he most desires and which it is most desirable he should have, politics cannot give him. The Negro needs at the present time those more fundamental things like prosperity, skill, mental and moral training, habits of industry and thrift. In the efforts he is now making to secure these fundamental things he needs and deserves all the encouragement that the white people of the North, or of the South, can give him.

At a dinner of the North Carolina Society on December 7, 1908, in an address on "The South and the National Government," Taft expressed exactly the line of argument that Booker Washington outlined in that memorandum, including the proclamation of the need for higher education in order to provide intelligent leadership for the race. Washington's files show that up to the end he was inventively active in exploring the different avenues of influence for the advancement of the colored people within the orbit of a harmonious inter-racial American nation.

As a last example of his method of helping the President to give more vigorous leadership in this acutely sensitive part of the national life, a memorandum may be quoted that he sent on July 20, 1912 to Taft as an aid in framing a national statement of policy when the latter presented himself for reelection to the Presidency.

The present administration has always been alive to the interest of the Negro. It has sought in every way possible to encourage him in his education and progress in other directions. History will show that the efforts of this administration have not been without tangible results.

Further than this, this administration has sought from time to



BUST OF WASHINGTON IN THE HALL OF FAME



time to place colored men of distinguished ability and character in important positions, not only in recognition of the worth of these individuals but that they might be held up as an object lesson to other members of their race. Without undue self-praise, I think I can safely say that this administration has gone further in placing colored men in distinguished and high positions than is true of any administration in the past.

The central government is hampered and circumscribed in its efforts to protect the lives of citizens against mobs and against the lynchers. From time to time in our various states, mob violence directed especially against the Negro, both in our Northern and Southern States, has been of frequent occurrence. Such outbreaks are a disgrace to any civilized country, and our whole people North and South should be called upon to use their influence to blot out for all time the practice of using the mob to accomplish that which should be accomplished through the medium of our courts. Wherever and whenever this administration could use its influence by word or deed to discourage and prevent mob violence it has always acted. I am glad to call attention to the fact that the number of lynchings in the country is gradually decreasing, and there are many evidences to the fact that the Negro race is making steady and substantial progress. And I think I can say further, that at the present time there are more friendly relations existing between the black and white races in this country than has been true of any period since the days of reconstruction.

In 1913 the Negro will have been free in this country fifty years, and the National Negro Business League and other organizations are preparing to celebrate that occasion, and the colored people ought to be encouraged and helped in every way possible to have a celebration that will call the attention of the world to the progress that the Negro race of ten million now in this country has made.

In a postscript to a letter received a few days later by Booker Washington, Taft said, "Thank you, Doctor, I think what you enclose is excellent," and added that he was going to use the material.

After the election of 1912, when Wilson was elected Presi-

dent, Booker Washington's relations with the White House became less close than they had been during the years of friendly collaboration with Roosevelt and then with Taft. His relations with government, as will have been recognized, had in them nothing of fiery denunciation of wrong or bitter cynicism at the inadequacy of reform, although the expression of each of those emotions would have been natural enough. He always preferred private influence to public declamation. His policy of patient persistence in pressing forward to take the next feasible step reflected his belief in the inevitability of progress so long as the Negro continued to improve his education, increase his economic hold upon land and other forms of property, and advance his business and professional status. For him politics was in the fullest sense the science of the practicable: "let down your bucket where you are." He believed in change without a break of continuity; and that this can be achieved by persuasion and economic pressure. He was profoundly convinced of the fatuity of violence and head-on collision.

The debate as to the weakness or strength of this policy and practice, in contrast to the program of direct pressure for political, economic, and social equality, will long continue. The opposing contentions are outlined later. The final judgment upon Booker Washington's lifework hangs to a considerable degree upon posterity's appraisal of that fundamental issue.



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THE APPEAL FROM AFRICA

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The tangled and ambiguous situation that embarrassed the little group of Negroes from America who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, were responsible for trying to rule the Black Republic of Liberia on the West Coast of Africa stirred Booker Washington to the most sustained of all his interventions in affairs of government. He saw that two lines of action lay open to him: direct action in contact with the United States Government and indirect action by helping to train a new Negro leadership for Liberia itself. He threw his energy in both directions. The years 1907-1910, during which the direct action with government took place, bridged the transition from the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt to that of President Taft.

To follow these two paths of action it is essential to have a grasp, at least in outline, of conditions in Liberia. These resulted from complicated historical origins, as well as from the political and commercial forces then driving the European powers into competition for precedence in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The forty thousand square miles of Liberia, lying between the French Ivory Coast on the east and British Sierra Leone on the northwest, were nominally ruled from its coastal

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed authoritative record of the highly complex processes of occupation and development is given in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and a fuller analysis is found in Raymond Leslie Buell's *Liberia: A Century of Survival, 1847-1947* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1947). An appraisal has been made by an American Negro in the *Journal of Negro History* (July 1947): *The Republic of Liberia* by J. H. Mower.

capital, Monrovia, by Negro descendants of freed American slaves. The capital was named after President Monroe under whose administration the Republic began to take shape. Freed American Negroes crossed the Atlantic to that African coast from 1820 onwards, largely under the stimulus of the American Colonization Society.

Two motives governed the different groups of white men who helped the Negroes to leave America. One motive was purely humanitarian and freedom-loving, although the fact that the African tribes whose land they took were in constant conflict with the newcomers suggests that those responsible for the enterprise were preoccupied solely with the freedom of the American ex-slaves. The other motive was the desire to rid American soil of freed Negroes, whose agitation as citizens for the right to vote under the Constitution was found embarrassing. Liberia proclaimed itself an independent republic in 1847 with a constitution drawn up on the model of that of the United States. Most of the European powers recognised it at once; the United States withheld recognition until 1862. The three or four thousand colored Americo-Liberians in Monrovia were faced with a vast unexplored roadless hinterland running back into dense tropical forest and mountain fastnesses peopled by unnumbered aborigines divided into conflicting, intractable and, in some cases, cannibal tribes. The Americo-Liberian ex-slaves had little education, no practice of government save the experience of having been themselves ruled by a slaveowner, no finance, and no mastery of scientific techniques. No roads were made. The United States gave no effective help. Control could not be exercised from Monrovia over the pagans beyond twenty miles of the capital. Raids were made by these tribes across the vague frontiers into French territory; and the French government from Paris insisted upon security—which spelt the threat of annexation.

A pure-blooded, educated, Christian Negro of outstanding ability, Arthur Barclay, from the British Caribbean island of Barbados, was elected President of the Liberian Republic in 1904. He made a heroic effort to give Liberia a new start. He tried to develop coöperation between the American Negro leadership and the aboriginal African tribes. In 1907 he obtained a loan from London in the hope of developing roads and agriculture and of policing more of the territory. Concessions were given to white companies to develop coffee and other plantations. But Barclay found it impossible to hold in check either the tribes among whom the plantations were started or those raiding into French territory. If the Liberian Republic was not to founder between the Scylla of internal chaos and the Charybdis of European annexation, help must come from some powerful quarter.

Contact was made from Monrovia with Booker Washington, whose knowledge of Liberia was at that time quite sketchy and inaccurate. Bishop Isaiah P. Scott of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whose headquarters were at Monrovia, wrote to him about Liberia on June 29, 1907. He said that "the greatest need of Liberia is a first-class Industrial School and a proper supply of books." Ernest Lyon, of the American Legation in Monrovia, wrote to him a few days later showing the dangers in which Liberia stood, as he saw them, and emphasizing Liberia's internal need. He asked Washington to influence the American Colonization Society to use part of its funds to establish in Liberia an industrial institute to do for the young Liberians what Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes were doing for American Negro youth. In his reply to Bishop Scott, Washington suggested that he should gather together experienced workers from Africa for conference. This was done at Tuskegee in 1908.

Other communications to Booker Washington must have emphasized the international problem. For on September 19,

1907, he wrote from Tuskegee to President Roosevelt saying, "You know, I think, the history of Liberia, Africa, how it was established by Americans during President Monroe's administration and how its interests have been safeguarded in many ways by Americans since its foundation. I have information from reliable sources that both France and England are seeking to take large parts of the Liberian territory. I am sure that you will prevent this if it can be done." Some unnamed writer put it to Booker Washington that "the European powers now have everything on the west coast; yet, Ahab-like, they covet Naboth's little vineyard." Washington soon found that he had been misinformed on at least two points. The Liberian Republic never had been safeguarded by the State Department at Washington nor helped effectively at any time in its difficulties. And no evidence was forthcoming that Britain had designs on the territory, although she was deeply concerned, because of the evil repercussions upon Sierra Leone, that the helpless Americo-Liberians had no power to rule any part of their chaotic and turbulent dominion.

That winter a commission from Liberia sailed to America to lay its needs before the government at Washington and to secure help through arousing the sympathetic interest of the American people, including its colored population. Seeing the possibilities for good and evil that lay in that visit, Booker Washington wrote to President Roosevelt in March 1908:

As I understand it, the Liberian Commission is coming here to see you in reference to the encroachments of foreign government from Liberian soil. I do not know, of course, what the custom of the State Department is regarding such matters, but I am wondering if, in some way, some special attention cannot be shown to this Commission. This is the first time that any such Commission, composed of Negroes, has visited this country, and I am most anxious that they be treated with just as much courtesy as the custom of

the United States will allow. Even if an exception has to be made, I think it will be a fine thing.

I understand, of course, the delicacy of handling the situation. I am already planning in connection with others to pay this Commission a good deal of attention. I am hoping among other things to have them visit Tuskegee. . . If I can serve you in any manner in carrying out the wishes of yourself or the State Department, please be good enough to command me. Whatever is done, or is not done, will attract a good deal of attention and result in wide comment among the colored people.

The fact that no white man from the South would sit down to a meal with an African Negro; that segregation in trains, hotels, and restaurants was prevalent, with numberless other discriminations intended to indicate the Negroes' inferiority, would obviously come as a severe blow to the colored president and vice-president of a sovereign state, which was the status of Liberia. The commission included, in addition, a former president of the Republic, a former vice-president, and a lawyer. President Roosevelt gave instructions for the handling of the commission which, owing to Booker's wise intervention, prevented not only grave embarrassment to the commission but deep offence to the colored people as a whole. On the arrival of the commission in May 1908, Washington became their guide, philosopher and friend. He led the group to the State Department and into the presence of the Secretary of State, with whom he had made arrangements for an interview. Elihu Root had a long discussion with them, which led at once to his sending preliminary letters to the Colonial Office of the British Government through the American Ambassador in London. For London had already raised a loan for Liberia, as has been mentioned.

One fact communicated to Booker Washington by Vice-President Dossen of Liberia gave him a surprising sidelight upon that Republic's difficulties. Dossen said that one reason

for the Black Republic's lack of progress through the eighty-six years of its existence was the fact that for many of those years it was engaged in a life-or-death struggle with African slave traders who had for centuries lived by capturing and shipping slaves from Liberian ports.

The Liberian Commission, feeling the need of a closer relationship with Booker Washington, suggested that he might become *Chargé d'Affaires* for Liberia in the United States. He opened up this problem with Elihu Root in a letter written on June 10, 1908. In this letter, which reveals his sensitive and shrewd approach to delicate situations, he wrote:

I am really anxious to be of some service to Liberia, but the question arises, whether it would be proper or desirable for me to accept such a position, and the further question arises, whether I could not be of the same value to them in acting in a private capacity or rather in a seemingly unofficial capacity. The official designation I care nothing about; my only object is to be of service, but they seem to be anxious that I should consent to take the position that they have indicated. The only element that appeals to me, in favor of accepting the position, is perhaps the fact that I might speak with some authority in helping the Republic carry out the advice and suggestions which you gave.

He then opened up the heart of the Liberian problem:

Liberia is practically the only portion of Africa which is now left in control of the black man, and I am particularly anxious that the people of Liberia have a chance to see what they can do. Fundamentally I realize, as I think you do, that there is no hope for these people except as they are able to get right down to business and develop the natural resources of that country, in a way to give them wealth and consequently strength and standing before the world.

The mere fact that they have the political control of this country means nothing, except as they can make themselves of service in the development of the natural resources of the country. In this

direction I want to be of service to them, in sending them some strong men from Tuskegee and in getting some of their brightest men to come to Tuskegee to get hold of our ideas and methods of work, with a view of returning to Liberia and putting them into practice.

Before I close, permit me to thank you most heartily for the very frank talk which you gave these people, and for the sound advice which they thoroughly appreciated. After leaving the State Department, I went over your conversation with them fully again, and they realize now, as I think they did before, that what you have suggested is the wisest course of action for them, and I think they will do their best to follow your advice.

No record of the Secretary of State's advice appears to have been made. Elihu Root's reply was emphatic. On June 19 he wrote to Booker Washington that it would not in any degree increase his usefulness to the Liberians to be *Chargé d'Affaires*, but commending most strongly Washington's idea of sending some strong men from Tuskegee to Liberia and some of the brightest men from Liberia to Tuskegee to learn Washington's ideas of method and work. He was particularly anxious that those sent to Liberia should be men of strong character and capacity for leadership and control.

Booker Washington tackled the problem of Liberia with vigor. He arranged an interview between Bishop Scott of Monrovia and Elihu Root in Washington in the middle of December 1908; he had long discussions with Sir Harry Johnston, and a conference with Mr. Taft which had momentous results.

Sir Harry Johnston had at that time crossed from Africa to America to visit Tuskegee. This remarkable pioneer had a more intimate, long-term knowledge of Africa than any living person. His experience ranged, even from before his travels with H. M. Stanley in 1883, through successive enterprises in east, southeast, southwest, west, and central Africa. In those

visits he had dealt with every European government then engaged in what was called "the scramble for Africa," and had profound knowledge of tribal life. From 1904 onwards he concentrated upon the affairs of the Liberian Republic. He saw the danger that its chaotic condition created both for its inhabitants and for the neighboring French and British colonies. He saw that, far from being an African Republic, Liberia was nominally ruled by ex-Americans, whose language, attitudes and background stemmed from America, who had no knowledge of tribal life, no training in government, and, above all, no backing by the finance of a rich country to develop communications, education, health services and police, or to train African leadership. In other words, he saw at first hand that Liberia was not being ruled at all, and that her chaos was a menace to all her neighbors.

Sir Harry Johnston's conduct at this stage suggests that he had in his mind the possibility of putting Booker Washington in charge of Liberia. He saw the Secretary of State at Washington, and then travelled south to Tuskegee, where he spent a week with the Principal going fully into Liberian matters. James Bryce (later Lord Bryce), British Ambassador at Washington, visited Tuskegee during the same week to join in these discussions. In a letter to the Secretary of State on November 30, 1908, Washington said: "Sir Harry Johnston spent a week with me at Tuskegee, and we had an opportunity to go over Liberian matters pretty thoroughly." He added significantly, "I learned many things of value."

As a result of talks with Mr. Taft, who was soon to become President, Washington wrote to the Secretary of State proposing that the Government should send a commission to Liberia. In a subsequent letter, on December 28, 1908, he said that he felt the need on that commission for "a strong man of executive ability who has had experience in reorganizing



and rebuilding governments under the control of the United States, for example in Cuba, Porto Rico, or the Philippine Islands." He recommended also a man of similar experience in relation to economic and financial problems. A day later he sent another letter with a long list of such men.

This United States commission sailed to Africa the following year, during the administration of President Taft. Before President Roosevelt had retired from office the suggestion had been made to Washington that he should be a member of that commission. In a typewritten memorandum dictated by him and preserved in his files, is his record of that occasion:

During President Roosevelt's administration I was asked to go as a Commissioner of the United States to Liberia. In considering whether I should accept this position it was urged that, because of the work that I had already done in this country for my own people, and because my name was already known to some extent to the people of Liberia, I was the person best fitted to undertake the work the government wanted done and help the little Negro republic in the crisis that had arisen. While I did not like the job and could ill spare time from the work that I was trying to do for the people of my own race in America, I finally decided to accept the position. I was very happy, however, when some months later, President Taft decided to relieve me from the necessity of making the trip and allowed my secretary, Mr. Emmett J. Scott, to go to Africa in my stead.

After the United States commission had examined the situation in Liberia, the Black Republic in 1910 transferred 2000 square miles of its hinterland to France. No demand was made by Britain. In 1912 an international loan of \$1,700,000 was raised for Liberia. The security was to be found in customs duties and some taxes. Administration under these heads was in the hands of an American receiver-general in Liberia, who thus had control of the Liberian government budget. A

frontier police force was to be organized by officers of the United States Army.

Meanwhile Booker Washington went on to try to press forward plans for creating a new leadership for Liberia. He broached the matter in correspondence with Miss Olivia Phelps Stokes, a founder of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Miss Stokes undertook financial responsibility for the schooling and board of Liberian students coming to Tuskegee. The relationship of Liberia with that family was of long standing; indeed, the first flag of the Republic was made in the home of an ancestor of Miss Stokes.

Long-term vistas of development were opened by Booker Washington when he put forward a plan, on lines suggested by Bishop Scott and Ernest Lyon in their letters, for the creation of a "Tuskegee" in Liberia. He wrote to Miss Stokes on November 25, 1910, explaining the projects of the United States Government for "readjusting the financial affairs of Liberia" and the boundary disputes, and for giving "Liberia a chance for stable government and for permanent life":

When all this is done, I think we can see our way clear to make the right move in the direction of establishing a first-class industrial school. . . . Of course it is not possible for us to go very far or do very much until we know more definitely what money is in sight and can be depended upon for the development and maintenance of the school.

Miss Stokes replied on February 7, 1911, that

If an interest is shown to start and properly control an industrial school, similar to Tuskegee, in Liberia, I will aid toward the building fund and maintenance of the school. I think it best not to say anything further before having some proposition submitted that will cover these points.

She laid down in that letter a general principle which would command Booker Washington's full agreement:

What Liberia needs is capable good men, especially those who will develop her resources and be able to take care of her finances, and without them she is liable to return to the condition of affairs she has just gone through.

The sagacious realism of that sentence provides the test that every experiment in self-government must pass if it is to succeed.

The intensity of Booker Washington's feeling on this subject is indicated by a statement which he made at that time:

For years, both in Liberia and Haiti, literary education and politics have been emphasized, but while doing this the people have failed to apply themselves to the development of the soil, mines and forests. The result is that, from an economic point of view, those two republics have become dependent upon other nations and races. In both republics the control of finances is in the hands of other nations, notwithstanding the fact that the two countries have natural resources greater than other countries similar in size. . . We must not be afraid to pay the price of success in business—the price of sleepless nights, the price of toil when others rest, the price of planning today for tomorrow, this year for next year. If someone else endures the hardships, does the thinking and pays the salaries, someone else will reap the harvest and enjoy the reward.

Walter H. Page, when United States Ambassador in England, entertained in London Judge McCants-Stewart, a colored judge of the Supreme Court of Liberia. The judge wished to see a public library established in Monrovia, and desired to interest Mr. Andrew Carnegie, who was then spending millions of dollars upon the establishment of public libraries. Ambassador Page, as an old friend of Booker Washington, wrote to him to ask if he would approach the millionaire. The reply showed that Washington had already been at work on Carnegie, who had repeatedly expressed unusual enthusiasm for him and his work.

"I have tried several times," Washington wrote to Page, on January 25, 1914, "to get Mr. Carnegie interested in Africa. He seems to have absolutely no interest in that country, and in fact has told me so rather bluntly several times. I fear there is little hope of succeeding with him."

The fact that all the attempts made by Booker Washington to find a sure foothold for practical advance in Liberia were foiled in his lifetime show how stubborn are those tantalizing difficulties which have baffled many friends of that Republic who, like him, have tried to help it to help itself. A series of sustained discussions in New York in the early 1940's, shared by representatives of most of the Foundations interested in the advance of the Negro race, like the Jeanes and Phelps-Stokes Funds, as well as the mission boards and the Liberian Government, made it clear that a main reason why the neighboring colonies of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast advanced by leaps and bounds while Liberia remained static was—as stated by the secretary of the Phelps-Stokes Fund—that while "much British money and leadership have been put into their advancement, Liberia is economically poor and thus has developed very slowly."

Two other factors have militated against development. The Liberian people can only advance, as Booker Washington saw, if, in addition to cultivating rubber for export, they are trained in a varied agriculture to support vigorous rural life; as well as in industry to provide them with technicians. The main source of payment for labor in Liberia, however, has been the Firestone Rubber Company of Ohio, which, over a large area, has developed a plantation economy. This, of course, uses the Liberian to produce rubber for export and therefore he is not free to grow subsistence or food crops for his own people; it maintains him under humane conditions and with improved health services and communications, but as a subordinate laborer on the white man's land.

Secondly, in the matter of education, separate denominational missionary enterprises previously supported isolated small institutions, with little or no coöperative policy or program among them. For some decades little training was given of the kind which Booker Washington, with true insight, realized was and will always be the prime need of a sturdy, self-reliant, self-governing, coöperative African commonwealth.

Washington's flair for using a practical illustration in order to stir fresh initiative is indicated by an incident related to the author by Mr. Holsey, who helped Washington at Tuskegee in his press relations. The Principal saw, in a cutting from an English newspaper, how many tons of a certain canned fish were exported from Norway and Sweden to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. He asked Holsey to discover what fish were to be caught off the coast of Liberia, and then wrote a vivid article showing how Liberia was impoverishing itself by sending money to Scandinavia to buy fish that could be caught off its own coast and canned in its own capital.

The 1940's have seen, in Liberia, alongside the adaptation of the Jeanes rural education method under James L. Sibley, as the first educational adviser in Liberia (appointed by the American Colonization Society and the Liberian Government), the growth of the Booker Washington Institute as a coöperative institution on Tuskegee lines. Established at Kakata, fifty miles inland from Monrovia, with a thousand acres of good land granted by the Liberian government, and with good buildings, this Institute is supported by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, the Colonization Society, white and Negro mission boards, and interested individuals. They are united in a board of directors meeting in New York. As the separate denominational schools in Liberia learn to send their best students on to the Booker Washington Institute for agricultural and industrial training, advance will be made toward

the goal at which Booker Washington was aiming in the last decade of his life; and that growth will always be linked with the institution in Liberia which bears his name. Tom Campbell of Tuskegee, who visited Liberia in 1946, and many Americo-Liberians agree in the conviction that one reason for the slow growth of support in Liberia of the Booker Washington Institute was that, prior to the appointment of a colored principal in 1946, the heads of the institution were white men. Great difficulty in making substantial advance along Booker Washington's lines will be experienced so long as the one-party government of Liberian oligarchs, among whom corruption is rampant, control affairs; fleecing the natives, opposing the training of expert agriculturists, engineers, and artisans who could develop the country's rich resources, and looking occasionally to the United States to send a warship to protect them from the justifiable fury of hostile African subjects.

One result of the wider knowledge of Tuskegee by European governments consequent upon the Liberian episode was that, when the first International Conference on the Negro was held in 1912, it seemed inevitable that Tuskegee should be the host. Representatives came from Germany, Belgium, France, Spain, Britain, and Portugal, whose governments all held imperial rule over different parts of Africa, from Latin America and the West Indies as well as from all parts of the United States. Booker Washington saw to it that all its expert members were shown the workings of the Institute and carried back to Africa and other lands knowledge of both the principles and practice of education of the Negro as he conceived it. No part of that knowledge was of more challenging importance than the fact that a Negro was the creative founder of the Institute and of its extension work, and that, through him, a faculty had been created exclusively composed of colored men and women.

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TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

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No surprise ever startled Booker Washington more thoroughly out of his normal equanimity than the sudden news in the spring of 1899 that friends in Boston had not only raised money to send Mrs. Washington and himself to Europe for three or four months, but had subscribed large amounts to compensate the Tuskegee treasury for his inability to make money-raising speeches during his absence. He fought a losing battle against acceptance of this offer. First, it seemed incredible that he would see Europe: "London and Paris I had always regarded much as I regard heaven," he said afterwards. Second, he dreaded that his influence with his own race might be harmed by the idea that he and his wife had become "stuck up" and were trying to "show off." He knew, he said, that men of his race on becoming famous had often lost their heads. "The fear that people might think this of us haunted me a good deal," he confessed. Third, he had never before stopped work and did not see how he could "do nothing" for three months. "The fact was that I did not know how to take a vacation."

He had no idea how desperately tired he was. The deep concern of his best friends on this account lay behind their insistence that he must go out of the United States. He at last acquiesced, and sailed with his wife from New York on the Red Star liner, *Friesland*, on May 10, 1899, bound for Antwerp. The thoughtfulness of their New England friends had installed them in one of the most comfortable cabins on the

ship. "The load of care, anxiety and responsibility which I had carried for eighteen years began," he said, "to lift itself from my shoulders at the rate, it seemed to me, of a pound a minute." He began to sleep after the third day out. He then slept for fifteen hours a day, not only for the next ten days of the voyage, but for some time after landing in the great port of Antwerp. The sights of the market-place, with the dogs drawing the large brightly-colored cans filled with milk, and the people streaming into the Cathedral, "filled me with a sense of newness that I had never before experienced."

Thence he and his wife went with that brilliant American journalist, so well beloved by countless friends in Britain and Europe, Edward Marshall, through Holland to the Peace Conference at The Hague. The Dutch people entranced him, and to see four hundred fine Holstein cows grazing in one green field gave him a new notion of what intensive agriculture can do.

In Paris and in London the Washingtons were overwhelmed with kindness by British and Americans alike. This hospitality culminated in their being invited, through the kindness of Lady Aberdeen, to be the guests of Queen Victoria at tea. Meeting the immediate descendants of outstanding English abolitionists who had collaborated in the previous generation with William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass, and being entertained by the daughters of Richard Cobden and John Bright, the outstanding reform leaders of that day, opened a new window for Washington into understanding of the substantial backing that the anti-slavery movement had received from Britain. He was astonished at the seriousness with which British aristocrats gave time, energy and money lavishly to support reform movements. He and his wife were entertained at receptions where the social leadership of Britain was gathered. He used those opportunities to recruit the aid



of wealth and political influence to advance the good of the Negro and of the subject peoples of the world. Every sidelight upon his behavior in those circles shows that he remained utterly unspoiled. An observer who watched him at a reception at Stafford House in London, then the center of Britain's most brilliant social life, as he was talking with the Duchess of Sutherland and two other women of high rank and dazzling beauty, said, "He seemed to be absolutely unconscious of the splendor of the house in which he was, or of the society in which for the moment he found himself. Born in a hut without a doorsill, he was at ease in the most stately and beautiful private palace in London."

One of his fears with regard to this transatlantic travel proved to have some foundation. A whispering campaign was started by some soured critics in America that he had turned his back upon the poorer people in Britain and sunned himself in the smiles of duchesses. The fact was, of course, that the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society had used its contacts with aristocratic leaders of reform movements to open doors to influential people in whose drawing rooms he could and did talk about Tuskegee and secure financial support for its development. A number of provincially-minded southern white people in America, eager to impose on others their own racial caste pattern, were incensed that Queen Victoria should have entertained colored folk like the Washingtons at tea.

One thing that troubled him in Britain was that, as he put it, "when I told a story that would have made an American audience roar with laughter, the Englishman simply looked me straight in the face without even cracking a smile." He put this down to English seriousness and to the Briton being "tremendously in earnest about everything," for he failed to realize the English ignorance of the idioms of the Deep South.

He discovered to his lasting joy, however, that "when the Englishman takes you into his heart and friendship, he binds you there as with cords of steel, and I do not believe that there are many friendships that are so lasting or so satisfactory." He was not the first or the last American citizen to leave England with the question in his mind as to whether in the long run, as he put it, "the ease, thoroughness and quiet orderliness with which everything is done does not accomplish as much or more than rushing, nervous Americans do. . . . The home life of the English seems to me," he said, "to be about as perfect as anything can be. Everything moves like clockwork."

Washington's last experience on that first trip to Europe and Britain dramatically reinforced his conviction that the racial situation was improving. He found in the library of the steamship *St. Louis*, on which he and his wife sailed back from Southampton to New York, a life of Frederick Douglass. Settling himself down with this book he came to Douglass's description of how badly he was treated on shipboard when he crossed the Atlantic on an American liner. As a Negro he was not permitted to enter a cabin but had to sleep on deck. "A few minutes after I had finished reading this description," Washington said, "I was waited on by a committee of ladies and gentlemen with the request that I deliver an address at a concert which was to be given the following evening. And yet there are people who are bold enough to say that race feeling in America is not growing less intense!" His heart was further rejoiced by the fact that at the concert, presided over by the governor of New York, and with a large proportion of southern people present, subscriptions were raised to support several scholarships for young Negroes at Tuskegee.

A decade later Booker Washington was urged by the trustees of Tuskegee Institute to take another prolonged va-

cation in Europe. He was never able, even when he went north in the summer to New England, to shake off the sense of day-to-day responsibility for the upkeep and the direction of its ever more complex and widely ranging work. At length he agreed to go across the Atlantic for three months if he could make it the occasion for examining the conditions in Europe of the peasants, whose life most nearly paralleled that of the cotton-cultivating Negroes of the Deep South. The method by which he, although he knew no language save English, managed in less than three months to gain an authentic insight into the conditions of the poorer people all across Europe from Sicily to Denmark, throws light upon his character and mind, and especially upon those strengths which carry defects in their train.

First came his unexcelled singleness of mind. He absolutely refused to look at any of the things on which almost a hundred per cent of visitors to Europe concentrate their gaze. "I registered a firm resolution, before I sailed from America, that if I could prevent it I would not enter a single palace, museum, gallery or cathedral." He adds two sentences that reveal the light and shadow of his outlook: "I have never been greatly interested in the past, for the past is something that you cannot change. I like the new, the unfinished and the problematic." That gift of single-minded concentration upon one all-embracing task was central to the success of his second European experience.

The second equally important factor in this, as in all his achievement, lay in his uncanny capacity to win the unstinted help of experts and to harness their gifts and energies to his projects. Dr. Robert E. Park of Boston, whom Washington had assisted in pressing for reforms in the Congo Free State in Africa under the scandalous personal régime of the first King Leopold of the Belgians, had become convinced that the

educational program of Tuskegee provided an essential feature for the reform of the Congo. He was ready to do anything in his power that would help Booker Washington. He had spent four years in Europe in study of its problems, and he had fluent command of the German language. He knew the problem of the Negro from his prolonged work in Tuskegee. He had acquired, as a journalist, the capacity for swift grasp and appraisal of fact. He agreed, not only to travel every inch of the way through Europe with Washington, but to go over the ground some months in advance to study the situation and to plan an itinerary that would cover the essentials and waste no time. He also secured documents and literature in every country which they were to visit, which were used afterwards to correct and supplement impressions formed on the spot.

In the long hours of travel by train from country to country in Europe, Booker Washington and Robert Park compared their impressions and pooled their facts. At each stopping place Washington dictated to Nathan Hunt, his stenographic secretary, his impressions from his notes and his memory. When these were typed, Park carefully revised them. Again and again American missionaries and others in remote parts of Europe introduced Washington to those of their native assistants who could speak English, and they took him to the homes of the poor in the tenements of cities like Prague, and into villages.

Washington's unquenchable thirst for new facts, combined with his skill in asking questions and his insistence in pressing for clear precise answers to them suggests the third secret of his success in reaching the rock-bottom reality of the life of "the man farthest down" in Europe. He had the insatiable curiosity of Rudyard Kipling's young elephant. To answer a question put by him always involved grappling with another that drove down still deeper into the eternal "Why?"

Alongside this insistent search for facts was an untiring joy in watching and mingling with crowds or groups of "common people." "I find," he said on this European trip, "markets more instructive than museums." In all the lands that he visited, from Scotland on the North Sea to the Mediterranean shores of Sicily, he wandered through the market-places. He had little confidence in or use for the armchair analysis of the bureaucratic student of social phenomena. He said with truth that as soon as you shook hands with a man and talked with him you found that the essential thing about him had eluded the cool objective tabulation of his condition by the statistician. Like his Master, Washington, "seeing the multitudes, had compassion."

A droll touch of humor enters, at times, into some of the experiences into which this blend of curiosity and the desire for first-hand contacts led him. Next to the hog and the horse, the animal that absorbed his liveliest interest was the mule. One day under the south Italian sun he was wandering alone up and down the hilly cobbled alleys of Naples. In a steep narrow street he saw a poor man unhitching his mule and letting it loose. "What on earth can that animal do in this closed street?" Washington asked himself. The mule alone could give the answer, for the man disappeared. The mule, of its own accord, started to clamber up the stone steps of a steep path between houses. Undaunted, Washington followed in its train. Plodding up the steps, he pursued the mule's path as it led him in corkscrew curves among playing children, snoozing men, and gossiping women, until it turned into a tiny crowded human tenement in a remote cul-de-sac. His curiosity had led him to explore at first hand conditions of the crowded poverty of southern Italy such as very few visitors see.

As we read the volume, *The Man Farthest Down*, in which Booker Washington, in collaboration with Robert Park, set

down the varied impressions of the experiences that they shared, we realize that practically everything that he saw stimulated an instantaneous comparison with parallel conditions or a similar situation among Negroes in the United States. A few examples may bring home the value that this travel was to be to him on his return.

I was surprised to meet in Vienna, Austria, as I did on several occasions while I was there, women walking barefoot on the pavements in one of the most fashionable streets of the city. One day, in speaking to a native Austrian, I expressed my surprise at what I had seen.

"Oh well," he replied, "they are Slovaks."

How vividly this reminded me of a parallel remark with which I was familiar, "Oh well, they are Negroes!"

Everywhere I went in Austria and Hungary I found the people divided according to the race to which they belonged. There was one race at the top, another at the bottom, and then there were perhaps two or three other races which occupied positions relatively higher or lower in between. I do not think I have heard anyone say anything worse in regard to the Negro than some of the statements made by members of one race in Austria in regard to members of some other.

The political disfranchisement of the Negro, by the pressure of the dominant southern white against the intention of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, Washington saw paralleled in the Hapsburg Empire.

Both in Austria and in Hungary all the races are supposed to have the same political privileges, and the Government seems to have made a real effort to secure equal rights to all. Here, again, racial and traditional prejudices, as well as the wide differences in wealth and culture of the different peoples, have kept the political power in Austria proper in the hands of the Germans, and in Hungary in the hands of the Magyars.

The superior position of the Negro in the United States in comparison with members of the submerged races in Europe

constantly smote Washington's attention. "The Negro is not compelled," he noted, "to get his education through the medium of a language that is foreign to the other people by whom he is surrounded. The black man in the South speaks the same tongue and professes the same religion as the white people." From this he went on to reiterate the truth that he felt was ignored by so many southern whites, that a race like the Negro, using the same language, professing the same faith, and enjoying the same American citizenship, was, in proportion as it rose in economic and cultural standards of living, a help rather than a hindrance to the success and prosperity of the other race.

In a very pungent way he applied the central and eastern European situation to criticize the vigorous advocacy which some southern white leaders were then giving to an American plan for importing millions of poverty-stricken European peasants into the South to supplant and eventually push out the Negro. The argument of these white leaders was that this would rid America of its tormenting race problem, and at the same time add to the prosperity of the South by putting industrious white peasants from Europe on the cotton, tobacco, and other plantations of the southern states. Washington pointed out that, if these European immigrants, clinging passionately as they do to their many different languages, came and settled in large blocks in rural areas in the United States, the racial problem in the South would be intensified by three causes of clash then absent, namely, the divergence of culture, language, and religion. Subsequent history in Canada as well as in the United States has reinforced the accuracy of his prognosis.

To follow Booker Washington from scene to scene is to become fascinated by the incessant swing of his imagination to and fro between the life of the European and that of the

American Negro. For instance, he found it "strangely interesting and thrilling" to watch the astonishing parallel between the men tramping the grapes with bare legs stained with wine as the fumes of the grapes rose in the air, and the slaves whom he, as a boy, had watched in the plantation at the corn-husking.

I noticed the way in which the leader in the singing bowed his head and pressed his temples, just as I had seen it done by the one who led the singing at the corn-husking. As a boy, the way this leader or chorister bowed his head and pressed his hands against his temples made a deep impression. . . . It seemed as if he was listening to music that welled up inside him, seeking to catch the inspiration of the song. Sometimes after he had seemed to listen this way for a few minutes he would suddenly fling back his head and burst into a wilder and more thrilling strain. . . . It seemed somehow as if I had seen or known this somewhere before.

In those vineyards and wine presses the women worked under an overseer with a switch in his hand. "There was no laughter or singing among the women, who moved slowly, silently, with the weary and monotonous precision of gang labor." As he moved southward across Europe, watching the peasant people of different nations, races and tongues, he was struck by the fact that the farther south and east he moved, the heavier was the burden on the woman. His conclusions at the end of it all in that respect was that "the man farthest down is the woman. . . . What the working women of Europe need most is a kind of education that will lift a large number of them into the ranks of skilled labor . . . that will teach them to do something, and to do that something well."

Characteristically he added, "The Negro women in America have a great advantage in this respect. . . . All the Negro colleges are crowded with women. They are admitted to the industrial schools and to training in the different trades on the same terms as men."



As he neared Naples towards the southernmost point of his travel he was oppressed by seeing so many women at work in the fields with heavy wrought-iron hoes, crude and primitive in make. "These hoes," he commented, "were much like the heavy tools I had seen the slaves use on plantations before the Civil War. With these heavy instruments some of the women seemed to be hacking the soil, apparently preparing it for cultivation; others were leaning wearily upon their tools as if overtired with the exertion."

He discovered that one reason why so many more women than he had anticipated were at work on the fields in southern Italy and Sicily was that four-fifths of the emigration to America—which had cost many Italian cities, towns, and villages two-thirds of their inhabitants in a decade—had come from the south, and that the great majority of the emigrants were men. He found one village of which the entire male population had left for America. He discovered, from statistical investigations, that where the wages were smallest, the conditions hardest, the ways of farming most antiquated, and the malaria most severe, the rate of emigration to America was highest.

Most visitors to Sicily at that time were fascinated by seeing methods of work that have gone on for thousands of years. Not so Booker Washington. It distressed him that men should endure endless hours of labor to keep their lips just above starvation level by using tools older than the pre-Christian Hellenic temples of that island, and plows of the type described in Homer, by irrigating cabbages with a waterwheel imported by the Saracens from Palestine in the Middle Ages, and by making wine in a rock-press cut out in the days of Solomon and worked by the processes described in the Bible.

When he had closely examined the lives of incredibly primitive Sicilian peasants by first-hand cross-examination in fields

which he had reached with infinite difficulty, he felt that he had indeed reached "the man farthest down." He describes, for instance, the lot of the Sicilian "sharecropper." He was supposed to give half his crop to the landlord as rent for the land; but, because the tenant was in debt, the landlord had supplied him with seed also. When the wheat had been threshed by the feet of oxen on a dirt floor, the landlord "gobellotto" took three times the measure of the seed that he had advanced, some more for guarding the field from thieves during the harvest, "another portion for the saints, something for the use of the threshing-floor and the storehouse and for anything else that occurred to him. When he can think of nothing else to be subtracted, he divides the rest in half; and taking one-half of the remnant, leaves the tenant the other portion, possibly barely a quarter of the grain he has harvested."

After overcoming considerable obstacles Washington at last managed to reach the entrance of the ill-famed sulphur mines of Sicily, where over seventy per cent of the world's supply of sulphur was carried up from the bowels of the earth by wretched serf boys. The memories of his own boyhood experiences in the coal mines of Virginia came back to him with a chill as he entered the damp, dark gallery. Deeper exploration led to tunnels where the air was as hot as a furnace blast. "I had known what it was," he wrote, "to work deep under the earth, but I never so thoroughly realized what it meant to be in the bowels of the earth as I did while I was groping my way through the dark and winding passages of this sulphur mine."

On top of all this came the realization of the horrifying promiscuity and unnatural vice among the miners and peasants of Sicily. This oppressed him with such a sense of degradation and degeneracy as to lead him to conclude: "Even in those

parts of the Southern States where he has been least touched by civilization, the Negro seems to me to be incomparably better off in his family life than the agricultural classes in Sicily."

Gleams of mordant humor lighten up his pages. He discovered in Sicily a Roman city buried under a modern one, and found that when the Black Hand gang—the Mafia—wanted to conceal a murdered body they left it in one of the ancient tombs, "for some archaeologist to discover and to learn from it that the ancient inhabitants of Sicily were in all respects like the modern inhabitants!" Again, after watching a young woman weeping outside a city gate for some time, he persuaded his guide to go with him to see how they could comfort her. With the tears streaming down her face she pointed to a pair of high-heeled slippers which she had taken off. "I looked at her feet and then at her shoes," he remarks, "and made up my mind that I could not help her!"

Having examined closely the condition of the Sicilian agriculturists he acknowledged that the Negro farmer paid high rates of interest on advances and, when ignorant, might be cheated on his yearly settlements. But in Sicily, unlike America, a famine in land existed. A few descendants of feudal lords owned the soil. As the population increased the tenant farmer was crushed between the upper and the nether millstones. In the southern United States "the land is crying for the hand to till it, the landowners fairly beg tenants to work their land. The tenant, if he dislikes his treatment, can go to a neighboring farm or the mines or public works. The Negro farmer's mind is opening to fresh ways of working his land as scientific agriculture advances. But the Sicilian obstinacy clings to the ways of threshing that prevailed in the time of Abraham."

The astonishing influence upon the rise of nationalism in Europe exercised by the vast masses from the "subject-races"

who had migrated to the United States never ceased to stimulate Booker Washington's imagination. Over four hundred thousand Slovaks of Hungary, for example, persecuted by the Magyars, had fled to America. There multitudes of them learned for the first time to read their own language. More Slovak newspapers were published in the United States than in Europe. Slovak leagues, societies, clubs, and other organizations flourished. In one year seventeen million dollars was sent from America to Hungary by these emigrants through banks alone, while further millions went in money orders. This support stimulated greatly the passion for liberty among the Slovaks in Hungary. The return to the homeland of scores of thousands of Slovaks from the United States, taking with them their accumulated wealth, broke through the pessimism and passivity of the older generation with a new sense of confidence and independence.

With his temperamental optimism, Washington arrived at the conclusion that the Magyar doctrine of their own superiority had been as valuable in stinging life into other racial groups as in stimulating the Magyars themselves to heroic efforts in behalf of their own race. "On the whole," he concluded, in one of his generalizations which would arouse considerable questioning, "in spite of its incidental cruelties, the conflict of the races in Hungary, like the struggle of the white and black races in the South, seems to have done less harm than good."

A discerning critic may well ask whether, in his travels through Europe, Booker Washington discovered nothing that could with advantage be introduced into North America. The one thing that stirred him to enthusiasm and put into the shade any advance made in the United States in his day was the coöperative organization and development of the country life of the Danish people—economic, political, and cultural.

He was filled with bubbling joy at the discovery that the political power of the peasant, which then dominated the Cabinet and Parliament of Denmark, sprang directly from the astonishing rise in the small farmers' economic status and that this sprang, in turn, from his mastery of the technique of producing bacon, eggs, and butter, and of handling their distribution coöperatively. Here he found a shining proof of the thesis that he was forever dinning into the ears of the Negro cultivator, that, in the balance of priorities, he should concentrate upon economic self-support and the ownership of land, houses, and business rather than in agitating, as a poverty-stricken sharecropper, for a vote that he had not the skill to use with independence and judgment when beset by grafting demagogues and tempted in his dire poverty by bribery. He found great reinforcement of the theme of his lifework in this swift growth of prosperity and power in the hands of the healthily democratic peasant people of Denmark, consequent upon the wedding of education of youth and adults to the life and work on the land. The subtle and closely-related tapestry of purchase and sale between the farmers and the merchants in Denmark was also in advance of any coöperative achievement up to that date in his own country. His humanity broke forth in a final panegyric to the effect that "the best crop that Denmark raises is its children. I never saw such healthy, happy, robust schoolchildren as I did in Denmark."

Returning through Britain Booker Washington found unexpected justification for his own policy in the life story of John Burns, "the man with the red flag," who had been imprisoned for rioting against the police but who was, when Washington met him in London, a member of the British cabinet as President of the Local Government Board, and thus was responsible for the most comprehensive series of reforms for the betterment of the life of working people that England

had so far experienced. Criticisms were hurled at John Burns by some of his fellow-agitators for accepting office in the government and thus being involved in compromise with the existing economic order. This paralleled the attacks upon Booker Washington himself for his policy of coöperation with compromise as the most practical path to reform. John Burns told Washington, "I had to choose whether, for the next ten years I should indulge, perhaps in the futility of faction, possibly in the impotence of intrigue, or whether I should accept an office which in our day and generation I can make useful for good works." Washington noted down this statement "because this is a choice which most reformers and agitators have to make sooner or later." He added John Burns's concluding remark that "the day of the agitator is declining and that of the administrator has begun."

An outburst of angry criticism assailed Washington as he left on the return voyage to the United States in the middle of October 1910. The onslaught was fomented by one or two vehement antagonists of his policy of compromise with the South in order to make coöperation possible. It started on the day after his speech at the complimentary luncheon in London organized for him by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, which sustains a watchful and vigorous activity in relation to all forms of oppression of subject peoples in continuance of the work of Clarkson and Wilberforce in fighting the slave trade and slavery. Under the chairmanship of Sir T. Fowell Buxton such distinguished leaders as Coleridge-Taylor, the colored musician, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Harry Johnston, the African explorer and administrator, and political leaders like Ramsay Macdonald, John Burns, Herbert Samuel, and G. S. Montague, came together to do honor to the American Negro leader. As the attack on Washington was in tune with the sustained criticism that started



MONUMENT TO WASHINGTON AT TUSKEGEE





after the Atlanta speech and is likely to remain active so long as rival ways of dealing with race discrimination persist, it is described in chapter XVIII, which is devoted to that discussion.

The paradox in which Booker Washington gathered up all these convictions about the peasants of Europe and the Negroes in America was that "the world looks more hopeful and more filled with God's providence when you are at the bottom looking up than when you are at the top looking down." He observed that, in comparison with old feudal Europe and the old slaveholding America, where the aim of those on top had been to hold down the serf, in the newer Europe and America statesmanlike minds were attempting to raise "instead of to depress the underclasses." His swift, concentrated quest of "the man farthest down" in Europe had intensified and reinforced his convictions, first, that the reform of a civilization begins at the bottom and not at the top; and, second, that "the future of the man farthest down looks bright." This, he said, was so because men were increasingly realizing that while, on the one hand, "a man cannot hold another down in the ditch without staying in the ditch with him, it is just as true that, in helping the man who is down to rise, the man who is up is freeing himself from a burden that would else drag him down."

This second visit to Europe was fated to be the last. Walter H. Page, at the end of 1913, when he was the United States Ambassador in London, wrote to Booker Washington urging upon him the importance of making another voyage to England. The Secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, John Harris, had approached the Ambassador with the suggestion that Washington be invited. Mr. Page agreed to put forward the idea provided the Society would open up channels in Britain for financial support for Tuskegee.

Booker Washington wished to respond to the invitation, but in his reply (January 25, 1914) he opened up a wider perspective. "What I have in mind," he said, "if I go to England, is not to confine my visit to Great Britain, but to go to several influential centers of thought on the continent as well, and in that way try to create public sentiment that will react upon conditions in this country."

Before these plans had time to come to fruition, Great Britain and Europe were drawn irresistibly into the vortex of the first World War.

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## THE CONTINUING DEBATE

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A number of younger colored leaders became steadily more drastic in criticism of Booker Washington's policy and program during the first years of the twentieth century when he was pouring all his energy into training a new leadership for "the man farthest down," and winning for his projects white understanding and support in the South as well as in the North.

Ever since his voice had reached the entire nation from the platform of the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, a minority of black as well as white intellectuals declared that he had "sold the pass" for the Negro. For the most part men and women born, bred, and educated in the North, they directly attacked him for accepting social segregation, for not opening up aggressive political campaigns, and for concentrating almost all his educational effort upon training the boys and girls of the Negro farmer and laborer so that they could achieve economic stability by the acquisition of skills and of land, houses, and tools. He had, they asserted, deflected money from the "higher education" of the Negro; he had developed understanding between the white North and South in terms of using the Negro as an industrial tool for making the capitalists everywhere wealthier; he had failed to challenge and defy the southern disfranchisement of the Negro. That formidable battery of criticism will continue to be deployed against him for a long time to come.

A review of the career of the most brilliant, cultured, and

pungent of his critics illuminates more clearly than would many generalizations, the stage on which this dramatic clash took place. In a small New England town—Great Barrington, Massachusetts—William Edward Burghardt DuBois was born in 1868. He entered an American world where slavery had already been abolished. His blood, as he has been reported to remark, contains “some Negro, some Dutch, some French, but, thank God, no Anglo-Saxon!” Sitting in the classrooms of the schools of that town from the age of six to sixteen, color discrimination was almost entirely beyond his experience. In games and skating, church festivals and the homes of his white friends, he was accepted as one of the local community of Americans. On balance the colored people in his little New England town were rather poorer than the well-to-do whites, but none of them was, he says, “so poor, drunken and slovenly as some of the lower Americans and Irish.” His own relatives were small farmers, artisans, laborers, and servants, all literate. He excelled at school so that his main consciousness was of happy achievement. His father died early in his life. A kindly white woman arranged for him to have Greek books in order to open the door to college.

Achieving a scholarship he went to Fisk College in Tennessee, which was equipped with a white faculty to educate Negroes, mainly in the humanities. Here, at the age of seventeen, he was suddenly plunged into the southern world, split into white and black. He saw the black held down by ignorance, poverty, prejudice, and “legal bonds.” From being an American he became a Negro. With his eye on Harvard he specialized in Greek and German, philosophy and ethics, and some physics. The ideal that lured him on was—to quote sentences from his chapter in the composite book *What the Negro Wants* that illuminate his whole career—that “through the leadership of men like me and my fellows, we were going to

have these enslaved Israelites out of the still enduring bondage in short order. It was a battle which might conceivably call for force, but I could think it confidently through mainly as a battle of wits; of knowledge and deed which, by sheer reason and desert, must eventually overwhelm the forces of hate, ignorance and reaction." He gained first-hand contact with the "bare-footed dwellers on dirt floors" by teaching school in the summer. Graduating from Fisk with an enthusiastic essay on Bismarck and aided by a scholarship grant, he went on to Harvard. Under William James, Josiah Royce, and the then young George Santayana, with whom he read Kant's *Critique*, he moved through philosophy to the social sciences. From that platform he would amass facts and develop a program for the Negro. He concentrated on the study of English. "I have something to say to the world," he wrote as a student, "I have taken English in order to say it well." He was a favorite pupil of Professor Hart, who, by an intensive history course, prepared him for Germany. The Slater Fund financed his further study at the University of Berlin.

In Germany he found a contemptuous attitude toward the Americans who—he was informed—had no music save that from Germany, art borrowed from Italy, literature rooted in England; and no zeal except for money. In the company of students from France, Belgium, Russia, Italy, and Poland, who had no consciousness whatever of color, he absorbed the social sciences and studied history under a founder of the Aryan "superiority myth," the fire-eating von Treitschke, "and heard him assert the general inferiority of mulattoes and mixed races." He traveled widely in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Poland, Italy, and France, concentrating upon art galleries, which—it may be recalled—Washington in Europe avoided in his quest of "the man farthest down." On the way home Du-Bois lingered in Paris until the last moment, and traveled

steerage to New York, "quite penniless" but carrying "gloves and a cane." His spiritual home had become the cosmopolitan culture of European cities and universities. At the age of twenty-six he plunged back into a United States where the racial tensions had raised lynchings of Negroes to a peak of infamy. The problems of race were destined to monopolize his energy and talent for all his days.

DuBois was invited by Booker Washington to join his staff at Tuskegee to teach mathematics, but unfortunately he had already accepted an invitation to teach Latin and Greek at Wilberforce College. Moving on thence to Philadelphia, DuBois was invited by the University of Pennsylvania to investigate Negro slums. He married a Wilberforce student on \$800 a year, and produced a volume of a thousand pages on *The Philadelphia Negro*. In it he laid down lines for a scientific attack upon the problem. But no action followed. Atlanta University, then an embryo southern colored university in Georgia, called DuBois in 1897 to carry through a social studies program projected by a wealthy white Bostonian, George Bradford. Bradford had watched Booker Washington's Negro Farmers' Conferences at Tuskegee and the beginning of his extension work. He wanted Atlanta to grapple with the problems of the underprivileged Negro in the city on lines similar to those carried by Washington into the rural field. So DuBois, in the city where, two years earlier, Booker Washington had made his epoch-marking speech, started in the quest of truth about the urban Negro.

We do not know what George Bradford thought when DuBois, after accepting the commission, swung the project on to different lines. In his own words, he made it a "scientific investigation into social conditions, primarily for scientific ends . . . a source of general information and a basis for further study, rather than an organ for social reform. I

put no especial emphasis on specific reform effort. . . My faith in its success was based on firm belief that race prejudice was based on widespread ignorance. My long-term remedy was Truth."<sup>1</sup> It was only later that Freud and experience taught DuBois how little reason has to do with action, especially in race relations; nor had Karl Marx yet shown him the potency of economic forces. From Atlanta for eighteen years DuBois published one monograph each year based on these scientific researches. Financial support flagged; no advance in action resulted, and he lost heart. Yet he sustained his relations with Europe: won a gold medal in 1900 for a sociological exposition of the American Negro at the Paris Exhibition, attended the first Pan-African Conference in London, and, with the help of an English friend, again traveled in Europe in 1907.

The sharp divergence between Booker Washington's leadership and that of DuBois leaps to the eye. The one was born a slave in the South, the other free in a North at that time devoid of race discrimination; the one rooted in the soil and the Bible, the other saturated in the agnostic liberalism of *fin de siècle* Europe. Washington repeatedly said that objective tabulation of facts by a statistician at an office desk misses the vital essentials; DuBois for decades pinned his faith to the publication of such surveys. Washington always linked the facts that he found on a farm or in a cabin with practical projects, training men's hands to grapple realistically with those facts. DuBois brilliantly expounded facts and ideas, expecting men to act on them. Washington always interpreted the facts and his projects to men and women of means in order to win them and their money for building institutions to train leaders to achieve reform. DuBois's efforts at money-raising were rare. Above all, with Washington thought and action were indi-

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<sup>1</sup> *What the Negro Wants*, p. 46. Edited by Rayford W. Logan. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1944).

visible. Facts, ideas, and deeds were harnessed together in order to achieve change. Training hands in skilled work was integrated with training brains to handle ideas. Booker Washington, however burning his thought may at times have been, never expressed bitterness. DuBois himself says that he could not break down his own "cold, biting, critical streak." When the Atlanta race riot blazed up, Washington hastened to the city and mobilized all the forces of government and good will to repair and reconstruct; DuBois also hurried thither to his family, writing en route his stirring and bitter *Litany of Atlanta*.

Events stung DuBois into action on convictions that had for years been maturing in his mind and feeling. At the outset, as he said, "I was not overcritical of Booker Washington. I regarded his Atlanta speech as a statesmanlike effort to reach understanding with the white South. I hoped the South would respond with equal generosity and thus the nation would come to understanding for both races." About 1902 he had several interviews with Washington, who wished him to work at Tuskegee and offered him a larger salary than he was receiving at Atlanta. DuBois's wife and other friends warned DuBois that Tuskegee might cramp him; and their influence prevailed. He refused Booker Washington's invitation.

In 1903 DuBois published *The Souls of Black Folk*. A chapter in it—"Of Booker T. Washington and Others"—contains a vigorous criticism of the older leader's policy and program. DuBois had watched the South respond to Booker Washington's efforts, not with coöperation but with Jim Crow legislation to keep the Negro out of the white man's railway and street cars, restaurants, hotels, theaters, concert halls, libraries, universities, and schools; to relegate him to often unpaved, unlighted, undrained slum areas of cities; and to bar him in many states by devious methods from the ballot



which the Federal Constitution said was the Negro's right. From 1890 to 1910 the South had hammered out a color caste system, making political discrimination against the Negro legal by state laws, against the intent of the post-war amendments to the Constitution. Washington's refusal to campaign in an all-out fight against these disabilities, and his concentration upon inciting the Negro to acquire property, led DuBois to say:

Manly self-respect is more than lands and houses. A people who voluntarily surrender such respect or cease striving for it are not worth civilizing. . . . I hold these truths to be self-evident, that a disfranchised working class in a modern industrial civilization is worse than helpless. . . . It will be diseased, it will be criminal, it will be ignorant, it will be the plaything of mobs, and it will be insulted by caste restrictions.

As DuBois saw it, the capitalistic industrial North was accumulating vast profits by using the cheap labor of the cotton- and tobacco-growing South as an economically dependent, quasi-colonial empire to feed the markets of the world. In his view, Booker Washington was employing this highly ambiguous motive to win money from the North in order to train southern labor to be skilled and industrious but with the destiny of that labor ruled by the white financial magnates of the North and South. Washington's direction of the General Education Board, following on that of the Southern Education Board, impressed DuBois as concentrating too exclusively upon elementary and technical training with a view to making the Negro a skilled tractable worker, thus diverting money from what is generally called higher education for the Negro.

In *The Souls of Black Folk* DuBois showed that he has genuine respect for and admiration of Booker Washington. Thus, in 1905 DuBois wrote, "to gain the sympathy and co-

operation of the various elements comprising the white South . . . at the time when Tuskegee was founded, seemed, for a black man, well-nigh impossible." Washington not only achieved this but was, as DuBois says, at the beginning of this century

the most distinguished Southerner since Jefferson Davis, and the one with the largest personal following, [and his] cult has gained unquestioning followers, his work has wonderfully prospered, his friends are legion, and his enemies are confounded. He stands as the one recognised spokesman of his ten million fellows, and one of the most notable figures in a nation of seventy millions. One hesitates, therefore, to criticize a life which, beginning with so little, has done so much. And yet . . . one may speak in all sincerity and utter courtesy of the mistakes and shortcomings of Mr. Washington's career . . . without being thought captious or envious, and without forgetting that it is easier to do ill than well in the world.

So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him, rejoicing in his honors and glorifying in the strength of this Joshua called of God and of man to lead the headless host. But so far as Mr. Washington apologises for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds—so far as he, the South, or the Nation does this—we must unceasingly and firmly oppose them. By every civilized and peaceful method we must strive for the rights which the world accords to men who cling unwaveringly to those great words which the sons of the Fathers would fain forget: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Dr. DuBois, in correspondence with the author in 1947, said that he had not modified his judgment on Booker Washington in the intervening thirty years.

That chapter in *The Souls of Black Folk*, followed by *Darkwater*—written by DuBois in prose of sensitive beauty and intellectual clarity, and glowing with prophetic zeal—provided the anti-Washington movement, for the first time, with a coherent argument. The opposition, therefore, grew, although DuBois took no active part in it at that time.

A spectacular explosion of anger against Booker Washington and his policy took place in a colored church in Boston in 1905. Three educated Negroes, one of them a Master of Arts named William Monroe Trotter, founder and editor of a fighting new weekly in Boston, led a group in vigorous hissing when Washington came forward to speak. They put questions to him on his attitude on the Negro's civil and political status and educational opportunities. Washington insisted that his duty was to speak on the subject before the meeting. They with others created an uproar. "Twenty-five policemen," William Ferris tells us in his *The African Abroad*, "were called in to quiet and subdue matters." Trotter was taken to prison. DuBois strongly criticized the action of Trotter and his comrades in creating the uproar, but blazed with indignation at their imprisonment. He had already aroused vehement resentment all across the Negro press and in many wealthy white supporters of Negro education by writing for Trotter's *Guardian* an article on the "venality" of Negro papers, which, he said, had "sold out" and "attacked viciously" every Negro who did not agree with Booker Washington. As he has said since, "I could not support this with concrete facts". His real resentment was against the methods of Tuskegee's press bureau, which sent advertisements of the Institute to Negro papers, special articles, "and other favors." As a result of DuBois's attack, donations to Atlanta University, where he was on the faculty, decreased.

DuBois was stung into action by all these events. He called

a number of colored leaders together on the Canadian bank of Niagara Falls, and in 1906 the Niagara Movement, as it was called, met at Harpers Ferry (famous for John Brown's raid and death) and planned a direct attack upon Booker Washington's program. Their manifesto crisply defined the goal:

We shall not be satisfied with less than our full manhood rights. We claim for ourselves every right that belongs to a free-born American, political, civil and social, and until we get these rights we shall never cease to protest and assail the ears of America with the stories of its shameful deeds towards us. We want full manhood suffrage and we want it now. Second, we want discrimination in public accommodations to cease. Third, we claim the right of free men to associate with such people as wish to associate with us. Fourth, we want the laws enforced against rich as well as poor, against capitalists as well as laborers, against white as well as black. We are not more lawless than the white race; we are more often arrested, convicted and mobbed. Fifth, we want our children educated. The school system of the country districts of the South is a disgrace to civilization, and in few towns and cities are the Negro schools what they ought to be.

DuBois left Atlanta University in 1909 to become Director of Publications and Research of the newly-formed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and founded the famous *Crisis* magazine, which for decades absorbed his main energies, with intervals for travel to organize and attend interracial conferences and establish contacts in England, Belgium, France, Geneva, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Russia, Turkey, and Liberia; in the latter country he represented President Coolidge at the inauguration of President King in 1923.

Of the many speeches from different Negroes attacking Booker Washington during these years two may be quoted as characteristic. A colored New York pastor, the Reverend Charles Satchel Morris, said in Faneuil Hall in Boston on

June 20, 1906: "I believe Booker T. Washington's heart is right, but that in fawning, cringing and groveling before the white man he has cost his race their rights and that twenty years hence, as he looks back and sees the harm his course has done his race, he will be brokenhearted over it."

The Reverend Richard Carroll of South Carolina, a popular colored lecturer at that time, rebutted Washington's thesis in these cogent terms: "They teach, 'When the Negroes get property and money, persecution in the South will cease.' It will make it worse. The Jews in Russia have plenty of money and they are persecuted. It doesn't make any difference what Negroes get, how much land they own or how much money they have in the bank, the sentiment of the South as to social equality will remain."

Applauding that view, William Ferris in his *The African Abroad* argues:

We must produce a type of manhood and womanhood that the Anglo-Saxon will admire. Then and then only will the Negro no longer be despised, but he will be freely accorded his civil and political rights. The Negro must acquire culture, polish and refinement, he must acquire an aristocratic, high-bred feeling. We must improve the racial stock. We must produce a high-minded, high-spirited, high-toned race of men and women, who will walk with head erect, lift their feet and strike the ground with a firm elastic step. . . . We must make some contribution to civilization, must develop the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic sides of our nature—then we will no longer be a despised but an admired race.

Mr. Washington and I agree that it is up to the Negro to do something and work out his own salvation. But there the Tuskegee sage and I differ. He believes the Negro ought to be a millionaire before he demands to be treated as a man; I don't. He wants the Negro to begin at the foot of the ladder and remember his mission and destiny is to remain there. I, too, want him to begin at the bottom, but I also want him to climb to the dizzy heights of fame, to go higher and higher, cutting his way up niche by niche. I want him to reach up and write his name in letters of gold side

by side with the scholars and scientists, the statesmen and orators, the poets and artists, the financiers and writers whom the world has long revered.<sup>2</sup>

The most coherent and serious critics of Booker Washington's policy and program must have been embarrassed by the degree to which the wild and whirling accusations of some of their colleagues prejudiced judgment on the reasonableness of their contention. William Ferris, for example, as a climax to the foregoing incoherent and self-contradictory criticism of Washington, wrote that the creator of Tuskegee, "thinks the Negro ought to be content to be a race of Jim Crow, segregated, disfranchised and non-office-holding serfs and servants." The record of Washington's persistent pressure upon Federal executives and state legislatures, as well as his public speeches and open letters attacking Jim Crow accommodation, and revealing the injustice of race discrimination in relation to the ballot box, together with the fact that he was responsible for securing government office for a greater number of leading Negroes of integrity than any other man of his time, shows the crude falsity of this charge. Nor does Ferris's accusation that Washington was content with industrial training for the Negro bear scrutiny in the light, for instance, of Washington's letter to President Taft in which he suggested the following policy with regard to higher education in words which Taft adopted as his own in his official speech (December 1900):

Since the Negro, in a very large degree, is dependent upon his own people for ministers, doctors, teachers and professional men, the Negro should not only have industrial training, but academic, college and university training as well, especially for those who are to become the advisers and leaders of the race.

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<sup>2</sup> William Ferris, *The African Abroad* (1913), vol. I, pp. 400-405.

Superficial observers like William Ferris led many people at the time to see in the Niagara Movement a head-on collision between two opposed policies incarnate in an older and a younger leader; and the possible elimination of Washington. Ferris wrote:

The Niagara Movement means that the opposition to Washington's leadership has crystallized around DuBois. DuBois is gifted with a more powerful intellect than Washington, is a more uncompromising idealist, and is a more brilliant writer. On the whole his is the more impressive personality. But Washington is a more magnetic speaker and more astute politician, a greater humorist, and less of an aristocrat. It remains to be seen whether the Niagara Movement, headed by DuBois, will sweep Washington and his theories from the field. This is not a personal fight, but a battle of ideas, a struggle for the supremacy of rival theories.<sup>3</sup>

The debate, however, revolved around facts as well as ideas and persons.

Washington's policy of fighting hard to secure equal though separate facilities for colored and white citizens in the "Jim Crow" states is vehemently assailed on the ground, not only of principle, but that it has, in fact, proved to be futile.

The argument, which is powerful, runs on the following lines.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, we recall, laid it down that no person shall be deprived of equal protection of the laws, or of his life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The Supreme Court had pronounced that segregation in street cars, buses, trains, waiting rooms, schools, libraries, and so on does not contravene that amendment as long as the separate facilities offered

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<sup>3</sup> *The African Abroad*, vol. I, pp. 276-277.

to the Negro are equal to those available to white persons. Booker Washington, as has been seen, worked in two ways to secure that transport facilities be equal; first, by direct pressure upon the railway and other transport companies, secondly, through the President. Continuously he also worked to persuade the different state administrations in whose hands education largely rests to raise the level of public education for the Negro. He did not fight for common use by both races of the same facilities.

Anyone who travels in the southern states sees at once that the accommodation for the colored people is in general scandalously inadequate in quantity and wretchedly squalid in quality. All the pressure brought to bear by Booker Washington and others has produced but negligible results. The condition laid down by the Supreme Court in relation to the Fourteenth Amendment is thus defied.

Even more serious, from the point of view of the nation's general morale, is, in a number of states in the South, the atrocious inequality of provision for the education of the Negro in schools, colleges and universities supported by public funds.<sup>4</sup> In nine southern states, a quarter of a century after the death of Booker Washington, (that is, in 1940) the average expenditure for education per head upon white pupils was 212 per cent greater than that upon colored boys and girls. The real discrepancy was still more glaring, for in those states the white school term averaged 171 days as compared with 156 for Negroes. A white teacher received on the average \$1,046 a year as compared with \$601 for a colored teacher. Furthermore, where college education is concerned, we discover in those same states the following provision of

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<sup>4</sup> In one or two states, notably North Carolina, progress has been made in recent years.



colleges for white students: 17 in engineering, 15 in medicine, 4 in dentistry, 9 in social services, 14 in pharmacy, and 16 in law. From all of these colleges Negro students have been excluded. In all those states not a single publicly-supported college existed to train Negroes in those subjects, except one in law. It is not to be wondered at, then, that, taking the South as a whole, while a white doctor was available for every 859 persons, there was only one Negro doctor for every 5,300 colored persons.

These conditions reinforced the plea that Booker Washington's efforts on this line of approach have been largely frustrated. Critics go further and declare that this shows that his forecast was mistaken when he affirmed that, as the Negro rose in the scale of economic as well as intellectual attainment, he would be freely accorded advanced status by his white fellow-citizens. For such reasons as these the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People came into being for more direct aggressive action. It sustains a steady succession of fights in the appropriate law courts, not simply for equal facilities for each race, but for common access by both races to educational and other facilities. That Association came into being in Booker Washington's lifetime, but not upon his initiative. Its origin in outline is as follows.

An unexpected challenge from a white Kentuckian, William E. Walling, on the heels of race riots and the Supreme Court decision which affirmed that segregation did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment, spurred DuBois, with Oswald Garrison Villard, then editor of the *New York Evening Post*, Mary White Ovington, the novelist, and some others, to call a national conference in May 1909 to "renew the struggle for civil and political liberty." From that conference sprang the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and its magazine, *Crisis*. Its policy called

upon black and white to coöperate to abolish forced segregation and to secure enfranchisement of the Negro, enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, equal educational advantages for colored and white, with equality before the law, and an end to mob violence. Many have seen this as an implicit criticism of Booker Washington's policy. As outstanding an authority as Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, editor of *Crisis* since 1934, argued in 1944 that the magazine and the organization really arose from Washington's "great work." "It was inevitable," he said, "that there should emerge, as the Negro made progress, a group which felt that the time had come for bolder words and more direct steps toward the goal."

Just before the first issue of *Crisis* appeared, under DuBois's editorship, Booker Washington was in England, speaking before a distinguished group of British leaders at the dinner in London given in his honor by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society. In the course of that speech he laid emphasis on the progress made by the colored race in America during the forty-five years following emancipation. He also unfolded his own interpretation of the development of interracial relations in the United States and expounded his own program of coöperation of black with white, of South with North, in educating the Negro. An American, Mr. Milholland, with singular lack of timing, issued a circular of protest against Booker Washington's presentation on the day *before* his speech was made. Oswald Garrison Villard, whose pen has always been his eager sword, received Milholland's circular at the NAACP headquarters and without waiting for a report of Washington's speech, sent him a combative letter, hitherto unpublished, dated December 13, 1910, having already sent a still more drastic criticism to Major Moton at Hampton Institute.

From my point of view, [Villard wrote to Washington] your philosophy is wrong. You are keeping silent about evils in regard to which you should speak out, and you are not helping the race by portraying all the conditions as favorable. If my grandfather [the most famous of the Abolitionists, William Lloyd Garrison] had gone to Europe, say in 1850, and dwelt in his speeches on slavery upon certain encouraging features of it, such as the growing anger and unrest of the poor whites, and stated the number of voluntary liberations and number of escapes to Canada, as evidences that the institution was improving, he never would have accomplished what he did, and he would have hurt, not helped, the cause of freedom. It seems to me that the parallel precisely affects your case. It certainly cannot be unknown to you that a greater and greater percentage of the intellectual colored people are turning from you, and becoming your opponents, and with them a number of white people as well.

In the course of a long letter in reply to Villard (January 10, 1911), Washington revealed clearly the sharp contrast between his philosophy of construction and coöperation and that of aggressive attack; yet, in his restrained way, making an attack on the knowledge and attitude of his opponents.

My speeches in Europe did not differ from my speeches in this country. When I am in the South speaking to the Southern white people, anyone who hears me speak will tell you that I am frank and direct in my criticism of the Southern white people. I cannot agree with you, or any others, however, that very much or any good is to be gained just now by going out of the South and merely speaking about the Southern white people. . . . I think it pays to do such talking to the people who are most responsible for injustice being inflicted upon us in certain directions. . . .

There is little parallel between conditions that your grandfather had to confront and those facing us now. Your grandfather faced a great evil which was to be destroyed. Ours is a work of construction rather than a work of destruction. My effort in Europe was to show to the people that the work of your grandfather was not wasted and that the progress the Negro has made in America justified the words and work of your grandfather. . . .

You, of course, labor under the disadvantage of not knowing as much about the life of the Negro race as if you were a member of that race yourself. Unfortunately, too, I think you are brought into contact with that group of our people who have not succeeded in any large degree—dissatisfied and unhappy. I wish you could come more constantly into contact with that group of our people who are succeeding, who have accomplished something, and are not continually sour and disappointed. I keep pretty closely in touch with the life of my race, and I happen to know that the very same group of people who are opposing me now have done so practically ever since my name became in any way prominent, certainly ever since I spoke at the opening of the Atlanta Exposition. No matter what I would do or refrain from doing, the same group would oppose me. I think you know this. . . .

I cannot agree with you that there is an increasing number of intellectual colored people who oppose me, or are opposed to me. My experience and observation convince me to the contrary. I do not see how any man could expect or hope to have to a larger extent the good will and coöperation of the members of his race of all classes than I have, and it is this consciousness that makes me feel very humble.

I confess that I cannot blame anyone who resides in the North or in Europe for not taking the same hopeful view of conditions in the South that I do. The only time I ever become gloomy or despondent regarding the conditions of the Negro in the South is when I am in the North. When I am in the North I hear for the most part only of the most discouraging and disheartening things that take place in the South, but when I leave the North and get right in the South in the midst of the work and see for myself what is being done and how it is being done, and what the actual daily connection between the white man and the black man is, then it is that I become encouraged.

You say that I ought to speak out more strongly on public questions. I suppose that means such questions as relate to our receiving justice in the matter of public schools, lynchings, etc. In that regard I quote you some sentences which I used only a few days ago in talking to the Southern white people here in Alabama concerning their duty toward the Negro: "I do not believe that the leading white people, and especially landowners of the Black

Belt counties know how little money some Negro schools receive. I actually know of communities where Negro teachers are being paid only from \$15 to \$17 per month for services for a period of three or four months in the year. . . . More money is paid for Negro convicts than for Negro teachers. About \$46 per month is now being paid for first-class able-bodied Negro convicts, \$36 for second class, and \$26 for third class for twelve months in the year. . . . One other element in the situation that drives Negroes from the farms of the Black Belt counties is this. In many of the Black Belt counties, when a Negro is charged with a crime, a mob of wild, excited and often intoxicated people go scouring through the country in search of the Negro. . . . In my opinion, if the Negroes understand that their public schools in the country districts are gradually going to be improved as fast as the state can do so, and that they will receive police protection in case they are charged with crime in the country districts, as they do in the cities, then the best colored farmers will cease moving from the country districts into the cities."

After giving one or two more cases of this kind Washington concluded his letter to Villard with "I am always glad to hear from you."

In reply to this letter Villard wrote a letter in which he endorsed the extracts from the addresses which Washington had been making in the South, saying, "They are good as far as they go, but do not go far enough to satisfy a Garrison!" Referring to the "Garrisonian temperament," Booker Washington replied on February 11, 1911,

No one has a higher appreciation of the work done for the Negro by William Lloyd Garrison than I. I have on numberless occasions spoken my word of appreciation. But is it not possible that those possessing the 'Garrisonian temperament' may be disposed to be more impatient with others because they do not do as they would have them do, in contrast with what would probably be the attitude of Mr. Garrison himself if he were living?

I have found that, when I am in the South, talking with Southern people, I say quite as frankly as I know how to say those

things which will help conditions, and that is the attitude which I believe Mr. Garrison would endorse. I could deal in epithet and denunciation as many of my own detractors do, but somehow it has never seemed to me that they got very far with that kind of thing.

Following this correspondence Booker Washington sought opportunity of personal talk with Villard. Evidently their conversation dealt to some degree with the development of the Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The Tuskegee files contain a telegram sent by Washington to Villard at Boston on March 30, 1911, saying:

Your telegram of March twenty-ninth received. Confirming the conversation we had in New York I would state that your lifelong interest and activities in behalf of my race urge me to repeat that I shall be glad to work in friendly coöperation with all the workers for the general advancement of the colored people especially in constructive directions.

It seems to me that while we necessarily may in the future as in the past work along different lines we still may work together in harmony, sympathy and mutual understanding. I am convinced that the time has come when all interested in the welfare of the Negro people should lay aside personal differences and personal bickerings and anything and everything that smacks of selfishness and keep in mind only rendering the service which will best promote and protect the whole race in all of its larger interests. In the last analysis I am sure that we all agree on more points than we disagree on. Further than this, the experience through which I have been passing convinces me that deep down in the heart of all of us there is a feeling of oneness and sympathy and unity. I am sure that all of my friends everywhere will happily coöperate with you in the directions I have mentioned. If your organization now in session can see its way clear to appoint two or more fraternal delegates to attend the next meeting of the National Negro Business League I feel quite sure that our organization will reciprocate in kind. It will be a happy day for my race when all of the forces and organizations while still remaining individually sep-

arate can sympathetically and heartily coöperate and work together for its larger good.

The NAACP went forward with its policy of direct attack and achieved remarkable successes in legal actions. As DuBois said later, however, in his honest way, "We continued winning court victories and yet somehow, despite them, we did not seem to be getting far."<sup>5</sup>

A pungent comment upon the alternative attitudes which confront each other in this debate was made by Booker Washington in his book *The Story of the Negro*, at the end of a chapter upon slave insurrections, in language that clearly reflects bitter personal experience. He speaks of the type of Negro leader who

insists that, if he had the courage to stand up and denounce his detractors in the same harsh and bitter terms that these persons use toward him, in a short time he would win the respect of the world, and the only obstacle to his progress would be removed. . . Any black man . . . willing either in print or in public speech, to curse or abuse the white man, easily gained for himself a reputation for great courage. He might spend but thirty minutes or an hour once a year in that kind of "vindication" of his race, but he got the reputation of being an exceedingly brave man. Another man, who worked patiently and persistently for years in a Negro school, depriving himself of many of the comforts and necessities of life, in order to perform a service which would uplift his race, gained no reputation for courage. On the contrary, he was likely to be denounced as a coward by these "heroes," because he chose to do his work without cursing, without abuse, and without complaint.<sup>6</sup>

A balanced and searching critic of Booker Washington's policy and program who certainly did not come under that

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<sup>5</sup> "A Pageant in Seven Decades," an address delivered on his seventieth birthday in 1938.

<sup>6</sup> *The Story of the Negro*, vol. I, pp. 190-191.

scathing analysis was Dr. John Hope, president of Atlanta University until his death in 1936. While fighting battles alongside John Hope against racial exploitation and for interracial understanding, the author watched him in action in world conferences in North Africa, Nearer Asia, and Europe, as well as in America, and shared intimate discussions with him in the writer's own home in Geneva and in the home of the Hopes at Atlanta. He told the author that for him, as a Negro, life was already "a series of tricks, shocks and fears when I was four years old," that is, in 1877. He was an exquisitely sensitive and cultured Christian gentleman; indignation at the bitter tragedy and towering injustice of the colored people's situation in the southern states smouldered in him with devouring heat. Where Booker Washington somehow sustained indestructible patience, John Hope burned with prophetic impatience, but without hate.

A characteristic incident took place when the president of the American Baptist Home Mission Society told John Hope in 1906, during the early struggling days at Atlanta, that Booker Washington would like to help him get money from Andrew Carnegie to put up a building there. Hope said that he was against the plan because he felt that it might mean agreement with Booker Washington's "social separation" compromise. That fear having been eliminated, the money was secured. A pleasant friendship grew up between the two men and their wives. At the same time DuBois and Hope were intimately associated in the aggressive Niagara Movement with its strong criticism of Washington. Hope was the only college president at the Niagara Falls Conference. He told DuBois that he had accepted Washington's help in getting the money for Atlanta but hoped for DuBois's continued trust. DuBois replied that he disagreed with the action, but that he would certainly continue to trust him. DuBois later accepted President Hope's



invitation to join again the faculty of the greatly enlarged Atlanta University.

John Hope told the author that he felt that Booker Washington undoubtedly made a contribution to education in a practical way, adjusted to local circumstances; but that the conditions for support of that education meant keeping the Negro in his place of subservience. What Washington did for the Negro, he said, was useful when he did it. He helped to produce tolerance for the Negro, but at too great a price. He popularized the Negro in the field of industry when he was unpopular. He had not really brought the Negro better protection from violence and injustice. It was, Hope felt, tragic that there should be only one man to whom all white people in North America turned for advice about the Negro; for his leadership was always disputed by many Negroes. Washington was a shrewd politician; he could weigh up white people as well as black, and he used them both to forward his policy. In order to do that he said too many things capable of bearing, in the mind of the southern white man, the wrong interpretation.

As will have been seen, much of the attack upon Booker Washington for his concentration upon industrial and agricultural training has been based on the contention that, in doing so, he accepted training for hand-labor as a special and perpetual racial function of Negro education, that he accepted a subordinate role for the colored people as a permanent condition. At least three considerations would appear to contradict that view.

First, Washington's view was not racial. He believed that similar training was needed for helping the "poor white" southern sharecropper out of his morass of debt and dependence. He encouraged the extension of the mobile agricultural "school on wheels" to white farmers. He applied the Rosen-

wald schoolbuilding fund, the Jeanes Foundation, and the work of the General Education Board to the white rural world as well as to the colored. It is significant that, since his death, trade unions in the South with a membership of white and colored farmers have been formed across the color-line to work in interracial coöperation for "the second emancipation."

Second, his study of "the man farthest down," all across Europe from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, led him to similar conclusions with regard to education in rural and industrial skills for the elevation of the white peasant and miner on both sides of the Atlantic.

Third, he encouraged students who showed promise in cultural directions to go on to, say, Fisk University for special training.

In other words, Washington believed in specific types of education for different functions; he did not accept the view that the skilled performance of an agricultural or an industrial function is in essence lower than that of a white collar worker or a member of one of the professions. He said truly that "to train the hand is to train the brain." He did not believe that any one set of functions belonged particularly to any one race more than to another. He was, however, confident, after a realistic study of priorities in the period following political emancipation and the tragedy of Reconstruction, that the outstanding and urgent need for the Negro in America at that time was to be equipped for owning and skilfully cultivating his own soil. He therefore concentrated upon those skills in Tuskegee. He did not attack any other educator for plowing a different furrow. He started a specialized and needed type of educational institute. He rose, in doing so, to a pinnacle of national leadership of his race. This led superficial observers to the distorted view that Tuskegee expressed his

whole policy, whereas he saw it as only one instrument, although a vital and essential one, in a work that equally needed other instruments that other leaders were shaping and using.

President Patterson, speaking in 1945 as head of Tuskegee, presents a masterly summary of the total perspective when he says:

It is clear to anyone who has read the autobiography of Booker T. Washington . . . that the objectives of Tuskegee Institute grew out of his dedication and that of his associates to the needs of the Negro people. This interpretation of need was based on a realistic concept of the past, present and future of the Negro people as a minority group in a capitalistic nation of great natural wealth and abundant human resources. More than this, we are pleased to note that Dr. Washington used what is regarded as a completely modern approach to the development of an educational program—namely, a community survey to determine the actual needs before attempting to put into course form the type of program that was to be undertaken by this institution. Dr. Washington saw clearly that the situation which presented itself was not only one of administering to a need that was abundantly self-evident, but it also consisted of ruling out certain unrealistic notions on the part of those who were to receive an education as to what education was all about. It is also interesting to note that the type of program which was decided upon in 1881 attempted to accomplish a two-fold purpose, as our curriculum today is set up to accomplish a two-fold objective. Namely, that which has to do with the development of competence in terms of the technical skills of the communities from which the early students came, and, two, the development of wholesome integrated personalities capable of assuming the full responsibility of citizenship.<sup>7</sup>

If Booker Washington needed reinforcement from other minds in standing by his convictions under the spate of criticism, it frequently came to him from sources of high authority. It may be questioned whether the world, in the first

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<sup>7</sup> Annual school opening address, 1945.

decade of the twentieth century, held any more convinced exponent of democracy or more sagacious and informed mind on race relations in all continents than the British Ambassador to the United States, James (later Viscount) Bryce. Writing from Washington on June 30, 1910, to Booker Washington, he first asked for the Principal's view on some material he had written, for the revised edition of his *American Commonwealth*, on the Negro question in the South, saying that he was anxious that any views he might state should not contain anything calculated to do harm in any quarter. He then went on to say that he had read Washington's book<sup>8</sup> with great interest and that most of its facts were new to him, expressing his strong conviction that the right course for the colored people was to make the most of their own social life, standing on their own feet. He ended by sounding a note of hope for the future, based on a consideration of what had already been accomplished.

Not infrequently men who had bitterly assailed Washington came to more favorable conclusions on deeper reflection based on fuller knowledge. One of the most impressive conversions from criticism to support of Booker Washington's policy came from William Henry Lewis who, as Assistant Attorney General under President Taft, had become the foremost lawyer of the Negro race in America. As a fiery young politician and a famous Harvard football coach, Lewis had told Washington, at a dinner in Boston, "to go back South" and attend to his work and "leave to us matters political affecting the race." "I joined in with his most violent and bitterest critics," he recorded. A few months before Washington's death, Lewis said:

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<sup>8</sup> Probably the two volumes of *The Story of the Negro* published late in 1909 by the Association Press, New York, as volumes 3 and 4, in their series on The Race Problem in the South.

Fifteen years ago I was one of the critics, one of the scoffers, one of those who asked, "What does it amount to?" You have lived [he went on, addressing Booker Washington] to confute my judgment and shame my sneers. I am now making acknowledgement of my error. . . . While most of us were agonizing over the Negro's relation to the State and his political fortunes, Booker Washington saw that there was a great economic empire that needed to be conquered. He saw an emancipated race chained to the soil by the Mortgage Crop System, and other devices, and he said, "You must own your own farms"—and forthwith there was a second emancipation. He saw the industrial trades and skilled labor pass from our race into other hands. He said, "The hands as well as the heads must be educated." . . . He saw that, if the colored race was to become economically self-sufficient, it must engage in every form of human activity.

The conviction that has become increasingly strong in the mind of the author during the years of research and of weighing the evidence is that Booker Washington from the outset had in his mind the ultimate goal of political and social as well as economic equality; but that he could not possibly help his race to take the needed first steps if he alienated the white South by proclaiming that goal at a time of inflamed resentment after the wrongs of Reconstruction. He was able by supreme self-control and by his profound sense that the eternal purpose of God was with him to rise above bitterness and exercise both patience and persistence. A similar conviction was expressed in 1944 by Roy Wilkins, editor of *Crisis*:

If it has seemed in the past that certain segments of the Negro population and certain leaders have demanded less than complete equality in the body politic, closer study will show that the goal has always been complete equality. There is considerable evidence that that master politician on the race question, Booker T. Washington, carelessly nominated as the "half-loaf" leader, envisioned complete equality as the goal for his people. A shrewd man, thor-

oughly in tune with his time, he *appeared* to be an appeaser and did his great work under that protective cloak.<sup>9</sup>

The longer one reflects upon Booker Washington's character and his hidden springs of action, the more deeply is one persuaded that his Christian faith gave him certainty that the way of constructive coöperation between races was in accord with the meaning of the universe and with the historic process. For the same reason he believed that high-pressure aggressive methods aimed at securing results swiftly by belligerent pressure were in the long run doomed to frustration.

Dr. Gordon Blaine Hancock has taken a similar position. A Negro born in South Carolina, with three degrees from Harvard University followed by study in England at Oxford and Cambridge and long experience as a Professor of Economics and Sociology at Virginia Union University, he holds that

The greatness of Booker T. Washington hinges about his common-sense approach to the question of race relations; and although his doctrines have been gainsaid by many who are unworthy to unlatch his shoes, his basic approach was sound. In advocating industrial education for his people, he hoped thereby to achieve their full-fledged citizenship in this country. He knew, as we have since learned, that the empty-handed knock in vain at the door of life. He reasoned that if the Negro could be made economically efficient he would stand a better chance of surviving even though his admittance to full citizenship be indefinitely postponed. This . . . above all else marked the great wisdom and common sense that make Washington probably the greatest Negro in history.<sup>10</sup>

Through those later years of challenge and testing Booker Washington moved on with ever more rigorous economy

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<sup>9</sup> *What the Negro Wants*, p. 117.

<sup>10</sup> *What the Negro Wants*, p. 222.

of time and energy to carry through toward fuller achievement the manifold projects that were all focused upon the central aim of his life. Counsels advising a slowing of the pace as physical breakdown became threatening failed to halt him. Through the summer of 1915 he kept going, although he felt increasingly the strain of activity. Against the advice of his physician and the wishes of his friends he spoke in August at the annual meeting of the National Negro Business League, which he had watched with so deep an interest since he brought it into being. A few days later he addressed the immense National Negro Baptist Convention in Chicago, a gathering which, at that time, represented as vast a multitude of colored people as any in the world. He had joined the Baptist Church as a youth at Malden and, within the wide setting of his Christian profession and practice, gave loyal service to his own denomination. On October 25 he spoke on Negro Education to the National Council of Congregational Churches in New Haven, Connecticut. A few days later, in a New York hospital, he was told by the physician that he had not many hours to live. "Take me home," he insisted, as he talked with his friend, Major Moton, the colored leader who was to succeed him as President of Tuskegee. "I was born in the South, I have lived and labored in the South, and I wish to die and be buried in the South." They carried him aboard an express train. He was taken to Tuskegee and died a few hours after he reached there, early in the morning, on November 14, 1915.

The debate that has been surveyed upon some aspects of Booker Washington's policy and his program is likely to continue, for men will remain divided as to whether reform should be attempted in the main by denunciation and political pressure or by the flank approach of education, persuasion, and compromise. In relation to Washington's person and work

we discover that, deep beneath the surface waves of criticism, lies an unswerving recognition by his critics of his sheer greatness. As attempts to express the quality of that excellence which marked him we may quote the words of those valiant critics DuBois and Villard.

He was [said DuBois at the time of his death] the greatest Negro leader since Frederick Douglass and the most distinguished man, white or black, who has come out of the South since the Civil War. His fame was international and his influence far-reaching. Of the good that he accomplished there can be no doubt; he directed the attention of the Negro race in America to the pressing necessity of economic development; he emphasized technical education and he did much to pave the way for an understanding between the white and darker races.<sup>11</sup>

Villard's fundamental view of Washington was expressed earlier in a characteristic outburst against two speeches by Mark Twain and Ambassador Choate who, he said, "spoke of Tuskegee with more or less reluctance." While they were speaking, said Villard,

I saw the man back of it; the earnest, inspired leader, modest, retiring, self-controlled and unsparing of self, too big to be affected by the snarling of the envious of his own race or insults offered by some of the other race. Never have I met anyone who has accomplished so much and connects himself with so little of it; nor have I ever met a man of better poise in times fraught with danger and full of anxiety, not only for himself, but for his people. The Abolitionists would have rejoiced in him—would have found him a kindred soul, so bent on his work as to have lost all thought of personality in his devotion to his cause. . . Mr. Washington has had quite as many opportunities to display moral courage as they did. . . How happy it would make them to see him walking into dangerous places without bravado . . . with simple faith in the ultimate triumph of the right, no matter what his own fate. They

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<sup>11</sup> *Chicago Post*, December 13, 1915.



would know how to admire and praise without stint one who stands so straight that with hundreds of thousands of enemies of his own race eager to see him make a misstep, anxious to point out the slightest defect in his character, scandal and rumor and gossip are silenced and abashed.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever view any man may hold on Booker Washington's policy and program, all may take to heart the thought of a twelfth-century writer who said: "We are like dwarfs, sitting on the shoulders of giants, in order that we may see things more numerous and more distant than they could see, not, certainly, by reason of the sharpness of our vision or the tallness of our bodies, but because we are lifted and raised on high by the greatness of the giants."

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<sup>12</sup> *The Tuskegee Student*, April 28, 1906.

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## THE LENGTHENED SHADOW OF THE MAN: AT TUSKEGEE

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The noble monument to Booker T. Washington that stands on the campus at Tuskegee at once ranks high in modern sculpture and expresses the essential function of his life. The artist, Charles Keck, a pupil of St. Gaudens, succeeded in his ambition of blending realism with symbolism to create a living image which conveys a parable of the man's work. Booker Washington, his virile figure and face alive with intelligence, vision, and power, is lifting a covering from the head of a young fellow-Negro, who is half-kneeling as though about to rise. The face of the crouching figure, still in partial shadow, is wondering, bewildered, and hesitant, as though mystified by the new light beginning to break upon him. On his knee he holds an open book. Around him are implements of agriculture and industry. Under the statue, which is cast in Roman bronze, is an inscription:

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON: 1856-1915  
He lifted the veil of ignorance from his people,  
and pointed the way to progress through  
education and industry.

This monument, which is eight feet tall, rests on an eight-foot granite base. Curving from it on either side is a stone crescent seat, or exedra. At the side of the bronze group runs one of Washington's characteristic sayings which sums up a goal of his action: "We shall prosper in proportion as we

learn to dignify and glorify labor and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life." On the left curve of the exedra is his affirmation of interdependence: "There is no defence or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all." On the right curve is the saying, best known because most characteristic of Washington's hardwon and constantly strengthened magnanimity: "I will let no man drag me down so low as to make me hate him." At the back of the monument is a further inscription: "This monument is erected by contributions from Negroes in the United States as a loving tribute to the memory of their great leader and benefactor." The contributions came from a hundred thousand American Negroes.

Paul Laurence Dunbar, the best known poet of his race, born in 1872 of poor parents who had been slaves, had written a poem on Booker Washington that was read at the memorial service in the Chapel at Tuskegee on December 12, 1915:

The word is writ that he who runs may read.  
What is the passing breath of earthly fame?  
But to snatch glory from the hands of blame—  
That is to be, to live, to strive indeed.  
A poor Virginia cabin gave the seed,  
And from its dark and lowly door there came  
A peer of princes in the world's acclaim,  
A master spirit for the nation's need.  
Strong, silent, purposeful beyond his kind,  
The mark of rugged force on brow and lip,  
Straight on he goes, nor turns to look behind  
Where hot the hounds come baying at his hip;  
With one idea foremost in his mind,  
Like the keen prow of some on-forging ship.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead & Company. From *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. Copyright, 1903, by Dodd, Mead & Company.

The monument is a natural vantage-point from which to gain a perspective of Washington's ongoing influence and that of the institution and the other agencies for the creation of which he was principally responsible. Tuskegee at the time of his death was justly described as "the lengthened shadow of the man." One outstanding test of the stability and vitality of his work lies in the development beyond what he left. The striking advances made by Tuskegee under the constructive statesmanship of his successors,<sup>2</sup> Robert Russa Moton and Frederick Douglass Patterson, show that the living tree he planted continues to throw out fresh shoots. The changes between Washington's death in 1915 and the fiftieth anniversary, in 1931, of the founding of Tuskegee were developments carried through in the years of the First World War and of the post-war distresses, mainly under President Moton. At the close of Washington's administration two-thirds of the students were below high school grade and none was above it. They numbered fifteen hundred, working in fifteen distinct departments where they were prepared for a total of thirty-eight trades and professions. In 1931 over a quarter of the students were of college standing and almost one-half of high school grade. This was, in part, due to the creation of a College Department, which included the Teachers' College, Business School, and the Training School for Nurses, as well as the Schools of Agriculture and of Home Economics. The primary purpose of the College Department is to train teachers in those subjects. The original conception of a "Normal and Industrial Institute" remains dominant; and no thought of developing toward a university has been entertained. The center of gravity moved, however, from that of training agriculturists as such to training teachers able to

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<sup>2</sup> Washington was called Principal; the trustees gave to his successors the title of President.

educate others to meet the agricultural needs of the South. The more intensive training that this policy calls for led to the increase of the faculty in the same period from one hundred and ninety-seven to two hundred and thirty-five, although the student body remained substantially the same. Opportunities for advanced study at institutions of higher learning are given to selected members of the faculty. The improvement in the standards of teaching and in teachers' salaries are all in keeping with this policy of developing a still better equipped leadership.

The buildings and the finances of Tuskegee during the same period showed similar development based upon the original foundations. The able architect, Robert Taylor, whom Booker Washington brought in from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, continued the policy of building durable, dignified, but not florid or ornamental structures. These, in the period under discussion, included a hospital annex, a Children's House, two dormitories, and a new Trades Hall. To sustain the higher standards of college work and more efficient teaching to more advanced students an increased endowment was essential. Hampton and Tuskegee launched a joint campaign which lifted the endowment of Tuskegee under Dr. Moton's leadership to a point which would have startled even the founder. The \$1,945,000 endowment at his death rose to \$7,704,000.

The quality of the graduates of an educational institution and their contributions to the life of the nation are as accurate a register as can be devised of its creative power. Booker Washington used to boast, up to the year of his death, that no regular graduate of the institution had ever received a jail sentence. In view of the origins of many of the students this was an astonishing record. The Principal was startled, however, a few months before his death to receive a note from

a graduate in a southern city saying that he was on trial for a theft that he had committed, and pleading with Washington to bring pressure on the judge so that his boast about Tuskegee might still be justified!

The 30,000 graduates of Tuskegee before its fiftieth anniversary included, in addition to many thousands of farmers and artisans, a bishop, architects, contractors, composers, merchants, a president of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, and a United States Consul. One of the most striking and valuable contributions was through the score of institutes and schools that are smaller off-shoots of Tuskegee, all founded in different states, by Tuskegee graduates and clearly reflecting the inspiration of Washington's principles. Still more remarkable has been the creation of what may be called "grandchildren" of Tuskegee, that is, schools initiated by graduates from a score of these institutes founded by Tuskegee alumni and alumnae. The archives of Tuskegee are also full of records showing the sustained and for the most part increasing fruitfulness of the movements that Booker Washington initiated. The General Education Board, which was first launched on the campus of Tuskegee under his stimulus, has gone on from strength to strength in its inspiration, support, and guidance of educational projects. The Farmers' Conferences have been initiated in numerous states. The National Negro Business League was fostered into wider usefulness by Robert Moton. Reports of the National Health Week show how much it has continued to do in improving health conditions among Negroes; and the same continuous service is true, as we have seen, of the Movable School extension work and the Rosenwald schools. Meanwhile, the Records and Research Department puts writers on the Negro and newspaper editors everywhere under its debt by its assistance in cases of inquiry and by the revived publication of *The Negro Year Book*.

No more striking and dramatic evidence of "the lengthened shadow of the man" can be found than the continued worldwide influence of the Tuskegee Institute and of its successive presidents. If a map were drawn to show geographically the radiation of Tuskegee's educational principles and techniques, lines would go out to every part of the earth. In every one of the southern states there are now at least half a dozen educational institutions named after Booker T. Washington and reflecting in varying degrees his principles. It would not be easy to discover any one college or institute that draws to its campus from outside the United States students of so many races; or that helps to equip workers of such varied types to go to so large a range of peoples. Always a considerable number of West Indians are enrolled from numerous islands in the Caribbean—notably from Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, Cuba, Haiti, and the Virgin Islands. American Indians and students of mixed origin from the Republics of South and Central America work at Tuskegee alongside African and Chinese youth. Many of these are sent to Tuskegee for training either by Christian educational institutions or by their governments. Others come through sheer desire to find a fuller equipment for life. Taking one year in the second half of Washington's work we find seventy-two students from the West Indies, of whom forty-three were British—enough, it was remarked, to have a couple of cricket teams, with an extra group to cheer! In addition ten came from Central America and five from South America, five from Africa, three from Mexico, one from Japan, and a Negro from Nova Scotia.

The strange paths by which Washington's influence radiated to unlikely places is suggested by a paper written at Tuskegee by a student who had come out of the heart of south central Africa. He wrote:

The first time I heard the name of Booker T. Washington was about the year 1902. I was then a young boy, just arrived in one of the Native Training Institutions in South Africa to train boys to become teachers. I had just acquired the elementary use of the English language. A native teacher from the upper part of the country came to give a lecture to the boys. It was about a boy—Booker T. Washington—who obtained education through his struggles . . . I did not understand more, but it is strange to say that this name was pinned in the bottom of my heart.

Later he read in a native paper the African editor's praise of a "wonderful speech" that Washington made at the time of the coronation of King George V. He concludes, "When I wanted to come to school in this country [America], I made up my mind to find the school where this man was leader; and so I came to Tuskegee Institute. I found the editor had well described the man's character and disposition." At the other end of the social scale we find the Maharajah of Cooch Bihar sending from India a gift of silver plate to Tuskegee in recognition of its help.

Still more complex and far-reaching are the influences revealed in a letter from the Reverend Paul Barnhart from Coquimbo, Chile, dated December 4, 1914. Writing from the Methodist Episcopal Church there Barnhart said:

We are trying to stimulate our Chilean members to learn self-help. Your life story is being read and discussed and they have just asked our superintendent and our bishop to establish a school. The mission cannot pay the bill. The people do not know how, but are willing to be guided. If you could take the trouble to have your secretary mail us a very small package of literature telling of the present condition of the Institute and showing how the boys and girls pay their way, it would be a great stimulus. . . It might interest you to know that Captain Ruxton of the British Government over the Benue district of Northern Nigeria in Africa told me when I was there that the ideals of your *Up from Slavery* formed the norm for his government policies there.



This widespread quiet constructive influence on the government of subject peoples was recognized in unexpected quarters. For instance, Mr. Herbert Asquith, when Prime Minister, wrote from 10 Downing Street (September 26, 1910) to express his regret at his absence from the dinner given to Washington by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, and spoke of the gratitude "which Washington's persistent and successful labours in the cause of the education of the American Negro deserve, especially at the hands of Englishmen, whose difficulties in many parts of the Empire have been helped toward a solution by the results of his work."

Men and women, mainly white, have gone to Tuskegee for training as educational missionaries, especially in agriculture and handicrafts, from all parts of America and Britain and from different European countries, especially France, Holland, Belgium, and Germany. These educators, when trained, have gone out, as the Tuskegee registers reveal, to numerous parts of Africa, to Brazil, Burma, Cuba, Haiti, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, many of the Republics of Central and South America, Trinidad, and most of the British and American islands in the Caribbean Sea. The Philippine Islands school system was developed on the model of Tuskegee. President Hoover selected Robert Moton, when president of Tuskegee, as chairman of the United States commission on education in Haiti. The development between the two world wars of schools sponsored by the Near East Relief was based on the Tuskegee model also.

But [as Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes says] most impressive of all is the influence of Tuskegee . . . on the British Government's policy of Native Education in Africa. This is shown in many ways, but Achimota, the College for Negroes on the Gold Coast, is perhaps

the most striking evidence. . . . As the report of the first Phelps-Stokes Fund Education Commission to Africa states, "It is probable that the methods of rural education organized by Hampton and Tuskegee, and extended by such educational agencies as the General Education Board, the Jeanes and Slater Funds and the United States Department of Agriculture are the most significant for all those who have the responsibility for the education of Colonial Africa."<sup>3</sup>

The election of Booker T. Washington to "the Hall of Fame of Great Americans" in New York University, just thirty years after his death, was a signal proof of his enduring fame and influence. Election takes place every five years and no one can be elected until fully a quarter of a century after death. 1945 was therefore the first date on which Washington could be elected. The public make nominations; a board of electors determine the choices. Washington was the first Negro to be so honored. The bust, sculptured by Richmond Barthe and presented by Frederick Douglass Patterson, president of Tuskegee Institute, was unveiled on May 23, 1946, by Gloria Davidson Washington, granddaughter of Booker T. Washington, with his daughter, Mrs. Portia Washington Pitman, receiving the cloth which had veiled the bust. That the United States Government issued a Booker Washington postage stamp in 1936, and, in the Second World War, named one of its Liberty ships in his honor, are two among numerous indications of his enduring place among the heroes of the nation.

The question whether Booker Washington's foundation work at Tuskegee would stand long-term strains and stresses came under crucial tests in the early 1940's. Two sources of wealth which Washington and his successor, Moton, had tapped liberally began to shrink swiftly. The multimillion-

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<sup>3</sup> *Tuskegee Institute—the First Fifty Years* (1931).

aires who had given vast sums to Tuskegee found tax assessments spiraling up to such dizzy heights as made lavish gifts impossible. Secondly, the rich endowments, like the Slater, Jeanes, and Rosenwald Funds, gave notice that their interest lay in initiating experiments which might be expected in due time to support themselves, and not in long-term sustenance of education. The steep rise in the cost of living simultaneously increased the expense of maintaining faculty, students, and buildings, so that the threatened fall in income coincided with rise in expenditure.

To meet these trends President Patterson and the trustees resolved on two developments. First, they put forward proposals for a United Negro College Fund with a view to more efficient coöperative action in raising income. This was achieved in 1943. Second, President Patterson and his board decided simultaneously to put more emphasis upon the higher levels of vocational education and to strengthen their relationship with the state of Alabama. The Alabama legislature resolved to vote an annual grant of one hundred thousand dollars to Tuskegee. The Institute was to accept three more representatives of the state on its governing body. This aroused a gust of criticism from some wealthy northern friends of Tuskegee and from some Negro intellectuals. The main ground of attack was that Tuskegee might thus come under the thumb of a state that was committed to segregation of colored from white youth, and that desired—it was said—only a working-class population of Negroes on the land and in industry—a colored proletariat.

The answer to this criticism was, briefly, as follows. First, Tuskegee Institute had been founded by the state of Alabama and had housed the State Extension Service among Negroes for nearly forty years. The new plan only developed that initial principle to meet a new situation. Alabama had bene-

fited by the absorption of many thousands of Tuskegee graduates into its agriculture and industry—thirty-six per cent of her more than 45,000 graduates. The state had now launched upon an all-round expansion of education. The Supreme Court decision that Negro youth are entitled to all educational advantages available to the youth of any race within the confines of each state laid a new load on the state. Nothing was more fantastic than to try to persuade Alabama to plan coeducation of white and colored youth in the same state institutions. Therefore, the best plan would be for the state to support existing Negro institutions as well as white in order to give the best training possible to their youth. Tuskegee with its extensive plant, its skilled faculty, and its endowment of over seven million dollars had reached the stage where fuller graduate instruction than before could be given. President Patterson has taken the lead, in concert with two existing state educational institutions organized on other lines, to round out a more adequate coöperative educational program among the colleges. In that total program Tuskegee takes the leadership in graduate and professional training in technical fields for Negro youth. The Institute thus not only trains leadership, but trains trainers of leaders in agriculture, home economics, rural education, mechanical and electrical engineering, veterinary medicine and nursing, with special emphasis on public health. Tuskegee has also begun to pioneer in another field that would be close to the heart of the founder: the provision of a low-cost model home. This ingeniously contrived, hygienic, dignified little home is so planned that the rural Negro and his children can shape from the raw material of the soil the concrete fireproof blocks for the walls and put the dwelling together for themselves.

Looking back to Booker Washington's attitude as expressed in his Atlanta speech, it becomes clear that this policy

of closer coöperation with the state government in developing a better—although segregated—education definitely “casts down the bucket where you are.” It accepts the fact of—but not the principle underlying—segregation, with a view to constructive coöperation. Impatient critics, fired with natural indignation against the whole principle of discrimination, are, when they criticize this policy, automatically shouldered with the responsibility of denying vocational education to Negro youth in those states where the door is slammed, barred, and bolted against interracial mingling. As President Patterson put it,

Any and all of the Negro institutions that have carried the bulk of the burden of educating Negro youth would be glad to go out of business tomorrow if we had the Utopian democracy for which we seek, and there would no longer be distinctions and discriminations based on race. Most, however, feel that this will not be true either tomorrow or in the near future; and that, in proportion as they work diligently at their task of solving the problem of ignorance among the Negro people and helping through demonstration to prove to many white people the error of their judgment in regard to race, the sooner will come the broad-minded intelligent attitudes that we all seek.

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## THE LENGTHENED SHADOW OF THE MAN: IN THE WORLD

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If Booker Washington were brooding over the contemporary scene in America in the years following the Second World War, would he find that history had or had not justified the conviction on which his program was based, that, in the long run, the Negro's progressive attainment of freedom from his disabilities would be achieved through his own contribution to the nation's life in agriculture and business, in character and quality of citizenship? To answer that question calls for a short survey of the dominant elements in the perspective of interracial relations.

Booker Washington would find the labor and business scene in North America almost unrecognizable. "In this new organization of business," as Burghardt DuBois has pointed out, "the colored man meets two difficulties: first, he is not trained to take part in it; and, secondly, if he gets the training he finds it almost impossible to gain a foothold."<sup>1</sup> For that and other reasons, he argues, "industrial courses must ascend from mere hand technique to engineering and industrial planning and the application of scientific and technical knowledge to problems of work and wages." In other words, the situation calls for an expansion and not a cancellation of Washington's policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Commencement address on "Education and Work," Howard University, Washington, June 1930.

During the two world wars and in the industrial boom at the end of the first, millions of Negroes trekked from the South to the North, drawn by the higher wages and greater freedom. Of three million colored workers in the North by the end of the Second World War, ninety per cent lived in six big cities. The South has been disturbed by the consequent reduction of the percentage of Negroes in southern states from ninety-five percent after Emancipation to seventy per cent in 1946. White workers in the North are tempted to organize to eliminate the Negro from the ranks of skilled labor.

The fact that the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations compete against each other in the South for Negro membership in their local unions has brought forces into play entirely absent in Booker Washington's day. Both the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. launched intensified drives for the organization of southern labor in the post-war prosperous days in that area in 1946. Both organizations tried to evade the explosive issue of race. To stand for complete racial equality in the South would destroy any trade union. To stand, on the contrary, for exclusion of the Negro, in face of the increasing migration of the Negro from the land to town-industry, would seriously damage any Union, although not fatally. Racial tensions were tightened by the fact that, as *Fortune* said in November 1946, "many Southern employers are willing to fan the flames of race feeling if they can thus prevent the [union] organization of their plants." The general policy of the A.F. of L. has been to set up separate Negro "locals" alongside the white ones, while the more left-wing C. I. O. "locals" have usually been racially mixed.

As a result, Negro-white relationship has become closer in trade unions than in any other area of life in the South.

Generally speaking, the only local institution that southern whites and Negroes share is the labor union. One point of long-term significance is that, in the South, a union organizer trying to win Negroes to his union normally has gone first to the Christian minister to enlist his sympathy and even co-operation. Many of the separate Negro local unions have been founded and hold meetings in the church buildings, with the active assistance of ministers, whose flock would often be composed almost entirely of working people. Most of the officers of a local racially-mixed union will be white, with a colored vice-president and chaplain. In the union hall they will sit on opposite sides of the building. The president will refer to a white member as "Mister" and to a colored member as "Brother" Smith. These "vestigial discriminations," as they have been called, are accepted and practiced in the interest of the common economic aims of labor of both races.

Drastic and unpredictable changes in colored labor conditions in the South will take place in proportion as synthetic products like nylon displace cotton from "kingship" in the world's markets, not only for clothing but as employed in tires and for many other uses; and in proportion as other parts of the world increasingly become self-supporting in cotton production. Other industries are continuously developing in the South, but expert economists hold that cotton still has the economic leverage to pull the rest of the South down with it. Severe depression in the South would increase racial tensions in the ranks of labor competing for work.

The racial issue in regard to labor in northern states is in some areas more acute than in the South. A study of the Black Belt in Chicago, the second Negro city in the United States, since the Second World War, reveals a condition of progressive adjustment between the claims and aspirations of black and white, broken every now and then by explosions into riot



and even slaughter. When Booker Washington was busily building Tuskegee in 1900, Chicago had only thirty thousand Negroes, less than two per cent of its total population. At the time of Booker Washington's death in 1915, white capital in the First World War was calling in the Negro from the South to fill the unskilled jobs for which no further immigration of Poles, Czechs, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, and other European stocks was available. The southern states tried to hold the Negro back, but without avail. In Chicago white owners of property and workers tried ineffectually to build legal barricades against the sale of houses to colored folk. Race riots and bombs failed to stop the flood of colored labor. At the end of the Second World War some ninety per cent of the population of about four hundred thousand Negroes in Chicago, totaling about ten per cent of the city's population, were crowded into a segregated "black island city." The struggle goes on for better living conditions and education, more equitable opportunities for employment, and the removal of the "job ceiling" that bars the Negro from the higher grades of industry. The C.I.O. has organized both black and white workers in the steel and packing plants, gradually weakening the barriers guarding higher-paid jobs against infiltration by colored workers.

The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union would indeed have startled Booker Washington, for it is a union organized from the very outset right across racial lines. The sharecroppers, whether "poor white" or Negro, feeling themselves to be victims of the pernicious one-crop economy and absentee landlordism against which Washington labored incessantly, realized that their common economic interest could only be served by interracial coöperation. Landless, voteless, with limited education, forced to eke out existence between harvests of cotton on the meager advances of the landlord, they

created this organization as a weapon in the struggle against economic serfdom. Alongside it the National Sharecroppers' Fund, with offices in New York, raises money from all over North America to help in their struggle.

In this sphere of race-relations of labor, high passion swirled round the activities of the Fair Employment Practices Committee set up by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the armament production crisis of the Second World War. His action followed widespread refusal to obey his proclamation insisting that race be made no cause for discrimination against Negroes in employment. Working against stubborn resistance by white capital and labor, this committee achieved considerable success during the war in opening the doors of skilled employment in war work to Negroes by threatening withdrawal of contracts from recalcitrant employers and by drafting into the armed forces white workers who struck against the use of colored labor. A reaction took place after the war was over, and, even in areas where a shortage of labor prevailed, many Negro men and women were eliminated from skilled work.

The barriers guarding the more highly-paid ranks of industry in the North against Negro infiltration are thus hotly contested. Each gain registered by colored labor provokes a further wave of white resistance, especially during periods of depression with competition for employment. By slow stages, however, the Negro in the North rises economically above the status of his fellows in the South. This acts again as a magnet to draw more poverty-stricken southern Negroes northward. So the white employers in the South, dependent upon Negro labor, are obliged to mitigate conditions for their Negro population. The Negro labor and other movements in the South that have been described continuously develop policies that take advantage of the Southern capitalists' need

for labor. Economically the standing of the southern Negro moves slowly upward; but at every stage when the political and social pressure toward betterment comes into action bitter white resistance is provoked.

Under the surface of this oscillating sequence of movements the fires of passion burn. Occasionally they flame up in lynching or riots that shock the nation. This menace of upheaval will not cease until deep-seated reform is achieved. Over a million young Negroes who were trained in skills by the government in the Second World War to fight for freedom against a racial myth of Aryan domination have shown their unreadiness to be quiescent under the domination of a similar racial myth in America. They are not content to remain barred throughout the South from all skilled employment on the railways and in telephone, telegraph, electric, and gas companies, as well as in the textile mills, now the staple industry of the South, although the South is not now, as it was in Booker Washington's time, the main source of supply of the world's cotton.

In the social sphere most of the southern states still keep the laws which Booker Washington, under protest, saw passed, enforcing separation of Negroes from whites in railways and street cars, waiting rooms and booking offices, with, in nearly all cases, grossly inferior and badly kept accommodation that has to be paid for by the Negro at the same rate as the superior accommodation reserved for the whites. Most southern municipalities have regulations barring the Negro from the schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, and playgrounds, as well as the better parts of theaters and concert halls, used by the white population. Often the provision of equal parallel facilities for the segregated Negroes is implied in the statutes; but the almost universal rule is—as we have seen—that these facilities are either absent altogether or are on a lower and

inadequate grade. One conspicuous exception is the segregated high school system in North Carolina, which so nearly approximates to equality that Negroes eager for good education migrate to that State. Thus they silently challenge the backward states by the withdrawal of laborers. Laws prohibiting the marriage of colored and white persons prevail in all the southern states. Sex relationships between Negroes and white women are visited with violent punishment; those between white men and Negro women escape these penalties. About seventy per cent of the total Negro population has white blood; that proportion rapidly increases, partly on account of the attraction of the lighter and darker young people toward each other.

In reaction against social exclusion the Negro has not tried to break it down so much as to build up for himself a parallel separate structure in business and some professions, as well as in the sphere of recreation and social amenities; but the white man has control of everything that is dependent upon public finance—like libraries, museums, and parks—as well as of transport and education.

In the political sphere, most of the southern states make a persistent effort to exclude the Negro from voting by poll tax laws and by intimidation. In some southern states proof that the poll tax has been paid is a statutory condition for registration as a voter. Although in theory this regulation applies to all citizens, the tax is nevertheless administered mainly against the Negro. Literacy tests, also, apply in theory to white and colored alike, but are notoriously used to exclude the majority of the Negro voters. The feeling of Congress against the poll tax laws has consistently increased, but its attempted action has been repeatedly foiled by "filibustering" tactics. The Supreme Court has made a sequence of decisions that declare, first, against legislation which evades

the meaning of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights, by discriminating against the Negro's exercise of his political rights; and, second, against extralegal devices, such as the "White Primary"—a preëlection vote confined to white voters which virtually settles the result of the actual election. This Supreme Court pressure has had considerable influence for good; but waves of resistance to liberalizing policy make progress slow.

Evidently in all three spheres, economic, social, and political, real progress has been and is being made against heavy resistance. Some of the progress is the result of direct pressures in law courts and even of organized public demonstrations, such as Booker Washington did not attempt. Whether or not, in the changed circumstances of the new time, he would have fostered these more aggressive tactics, is a question which cannot be confidently answered. It is certain, however, that he would have thrown himself wholeheartedly into the national coöperative measures that make all forms of peaceful pressure, Negro and white, more coherent and effective.

Among these national coöperative movements, for instance, twenty-five national Negro organizations, representing vast numbers and large property in the aggregate, in 1944 issued a joint statement of their demands, an experiment in a fresh line of strategy. The Negro press, with its thousands of periodicals reaching millions of readers and with overseas correspondents, swung with considerable unanimity behind the labor movement. The predominantly white churches have become more deeply troubled at the clash between their teaching and the practical segregation prevailing in the churches themselves in many areas. After a century of educational effort, the American Missionary Association, which founded Hampton among its many creative enterprises, held

for the first time in the South a three-week interracial institute followed by pressure for action. The Federal Council of Churches has not only issued decisive pronouncements on racial issues but has set up a permanent commission with a budget and instructions to get into action; and it calls into its councils representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, of the Congress of Industrial Organizations Committee to abolish discrimination, and other labor and youth organizations.

A number of the principles by which Booker Washington stood stubbornly have thus clearly been justified by experience. First, while on the one hand most southerners are as rigidly opposed as ever to social intermingling, their objection to "job equality," better education, and even the political rights of Negro citizens is steadily lessening. This coincides with the Negroes' own gradation of priorities. Negroes are interested, first of all, in equality of jobs and pay. Rights as citizens rank second; although the pressure to achieve them increases. The Negro shrewdly values courtesy from white men below good schools, playgrounds, and housing; and he has no interest in intermarriage. This is precisely the order in which Booker Washington ranked his objectives.

A reinforcement of Washington's conviction that, in the long run, merit and capacity secure recognition and status, is found in a movement started by Mr. Fred G. Wale, director of education of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. He wrote in June 1946 to five hundred college and university presidents in thirty northern states about the appointment of Negroes on their faculties. "It would be wrong," he said, "to appoint an unworthy person just because he was a Negro, but it would be equally wrong to turn down a worthy candidate because he was a Negro." In carrying that principle into effect an immediate difficulty presented itself. No Negro ever

expected to be appointed to a white university faculty. This made it necessary for the universities to seek qualified candidates. The Julius Rosenwald Fund staff assisted in this. By the summer of 1947 seventy-eight Negro men and women were appointed to the faculties of northern colleges and universities, including a professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota, of art at New York University, and a lecturer in electrical engineering at the University of California. In each case the man or woman was appointed only after thorough search for the person best qualified for the post, regardless of race.<sup>2</sup> It must, however, be noted that the idea of such equal opportunity on faculties being offered to Negroes of capacity has not even been adumbrated in the South.

A second Booker Washington principle which history is justifying is that the dividing line of the struggle is not between white and black. The division is between those, both colored and white, who will work together for development of the gifts of each race in harmonious coöperation, as against those, both white and colored, who affirm or accept the myth of permanent dominance of one race over another.

A third stream of experience that would seem to reinforce Booker Washington's convictions comes from the undeniable fact that the influence of Federal political pressure is severely limited by resistance to it in the southern states. Without question, governmental affirmations have real value as direction posts pointing forward. However, no Constitutional amendment on citizenship or the right to vote, no Presidential proclamation on fair employment practices, no dictum of the Supreme Court will, of itself, secure those rights unless reinforced by education in moral and spiritual values,

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<sup>2</sup> See *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1947.

economic development, and the organization of interracial groups for concerted action.

Inspired by the outstanding success of its *African Survey* conducted by Lord Hailey, the Carnegie Corporation invited a master in the social sciences from a land with no imperial rule over subject peoples to give four years of intensive study of the place of the Negro in American life, with adequate finance for a thorough survey. Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, the distinguished social economist from the University of Stockholm and economic adviser to the Swedish government, undertook the task and published in 1944 his two-volume report entitled *An American Dilemma*,<sup>3</sup> containing his objective conclusions, together with supplementary volumes prepared by scholars associated with him. These data constitute the one completely objective and authoritative diagnosis ever made, a formidable array of facts and forces with which all American citizens, and especially the white South, must come to an understanding.

Gunnar Myrdal sees the core of the problem and of the resistance to advance "in the heart of the [white] American." The white American today is tormented in the depths of his subconscious by a basic tension. This applies to white labor in the North as well as to the white South. He adheres verbally to "the American creed"—belief in democratic equality, liberty, and government by consent of the governed. He is nevertheless the prey of economic, social and sexual fears of a racially alien colored minority. To justify his consequent discriminations against the Negro, which deny in practice the theory of the "American creed," the southern white man creates what Myrdal calls "beliefs with a purpose." These myths are all, from the point of view of science, false. One

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<sup>3</sup> New York: Harper Brothers, 1944.



such myth is that the Negroes are a homogeneous race, whereas over seventy per cent have white or Indian blood, in many cases ninety per cent of the ancestry being non-Negro. Another false "belief with a purpose" is that this race is inherently and biologically inferior, although anthropological science finds no evidence to support that view; and, in any case, the majority have white blood. Still another baseless belief is that of a special Negro smell. And another is that the Negro is ineradicably an irresponsible "child of nature" with no capacity to handle mechanism, and preferring happy-go-lucky, shiftless penury to responsible self-support.

To offset the sense of impotence induced in the reformer by the weight of these myths and the persistent economic, social and political discrimination that they support, Gunnar Myrdal brings into relief two encouraging facts. He feels that a cautious optimism is warranted, that scientific investigation, open discussion, and right education about facts and about spiritual and moral values, do indeed gradually melt away even the most powerful and resistant myth.<sup>4</sup> The second fact is the power of what he calls "the principle of cumulation" to effect social change. This latter force, in some respects, is that to which Booker Washington pinned his faith—that in the long run the cumulative effect of rising standards of Negro life will, alongside other causes, irresistibly bring about improvement in white attitude each new stage of achieved progress cumulatively reinforcing the upward momentum.<sup>5</sup>

If realistic education of the new generation on a basis of fact and of right values is to liquidate these myths, sustained pressure must be brought to bear against those numerous, widely-used school and college textbooks which propagate

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<sup>4</sup> *American Dilemma*, Vol. I, pp. 101-110.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 75-78.

the "beliefs with a purpose." This involves rewriting in many books the story of the American people, as well as of the African civilization from which the Negro was wrenched into slavery, in order to present him in his true perspective. The stubbornness of resistance to any effort to dethrone these myths in the interests of truth was exemplified in the Second World War, when an entirely scientific and objective brochure called *The Races of Mankind*, specially prepared under government auspices for the education of the American armed forces who were setting out to destroy in Europe the authority of the Aryan racial myth, was banned by the military authorities because its facts and conclusions were unpalatable to the American devotees of that same Aryan myth.

A corporate delusion, prevalent in the South but not ranking as a racial myth, is the conviction that, because the southern white lives alongside the Negro, he therefore knows him with an intimacy denied to all other white people. This argument is widely used in the South to bludgeon reformers into silence. It is entirely fallacious. The southern white folk are physically near to the colored people; but they are in all essentials separated from them by the invisible plate glass of segregation and domination. The white people cannot get round or through or over that transparent but resistant barrier so long as they are serfs of the racial myth. Every Negro knows this; and books like Richard Wright's *Black Boy* bear eloquent and unanswerable witness to it. Any white man knows it who, like the author, has lived on natural and unself-conscious terms of social intercourse with colored men and women, young and old, in their homes and in their universities in the South, in the border states, and in the North, and has also mingled with equal freedom with their white fellow citizens. The southern plea to "leave the Negro to us and we will solve the problem" is therefore rooted in an illusion that would be pathetic if it were not tragic.

An influence that had hardly any place in the American consciousness in Booker Washington's time has emerged into greater power with every year in the period following the Second World War. Between two oceans, the American people, in the days before they were drawn by their stupendous growth of power into inevitable world leadership, cared less than perhaps any nation what other people thought of them. Gunnar Myrdal's report affirms that, in the new era of world interdependence, the treatment of the Negro in the United States is the greatest world barrier to America's moral leadership. Japan, in the Second World War, made that racial scandal a principal theme of its anti-American propaganda all across Asia. Soviet Russia sees it as the vulnerable Achilles' heel of the United States when she claims to be the protagonist of democracy in action.

Bishop Francis J. McConnell, as chairman of the "Committee of One Hundred", founded by the late William Allan Neilson, "dedicated to the creation of an America of justice and equality for our Negro fellow citizens," put this issue cogently in a letter in 1947 requesting financial help for the NAACP in its legal fight against the governor of Georgia for reestablishing the "White Primary" which had been outlawed by the Supreme Court decision in 1944:

The gentlemen from Georgia say "Hands off. This is our problem." Is it only their problem when millions of people throughout the world condemn our country for its savage repression of its colored citizens? Is it enough to bring freedom to people in other lands while we deny more than one million Negro veterans the elementary freedoms for which the war allegedly was fought? Can we be free while our brothers of color live in mortal terror of Judge Lynch? Is all this of no concern to anybody save the Talmadges of Georgia?

Unnumbered examples could be given paralleling the experience of an American in a café in Teheran, when he was

shown by its proprietor a photograph in an Iranian newspaper of a lynching in the United States. "Does that really take place in America?" asked the Teheran citizen. "I am afraid that it does," replied the American. Throwing his hands in the air in a gesture of bewildered horror, the Iranian exclaimed, "Allah be praised that I live in a civilized country!"

In an eloquent passage Myrdal declares that, if the United States could show that real justice, equality, and coöperation are possible between the white and black races,

America's prestige and power abroad would rise immensely. The century-old dream of American patriots, that America should give to the entire world its own freedoms and its own faith, would come true. . . . And America would have a spiritual power many times stronger than all her financial and military resources—the power of the trust and support of all good people on earth.<sup>6</sup>

This knowledge of the scrutiny of American race-relations by the critical consciousness of the outer world is not the only force that is increasingly disturbing the mind and heart of the South. Inner leavens are also vigorously at work. Sensitive appraisers of campus convictions agree that a growing minority of white students in the universities of the South are decisively standing against the caste-pattern and in favor of putting democratic principles into practice in race relations. The attitude and action of judges in southern law-courts are also repeatedly challenging the prevailing pattern of political race discrimination. Two examples in 1947 dramatize this inner conflict in the South.

The first illustration shows a judge in Charleston, South Carolina, giving judgment in a case brought by a Negro who was denied enrollment in the State's Democratic primary be-

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<sup>6</sup> *American Dilemma*, Vol. II, pp. 1021-1022.

cause of his color. For years the party rules had limited the vote to "white Democrats." Judge Waring in July 1947 pronounced that "Negroes are entitled to be enrolled to vote." The second and more sensational case, at Greenville, South Carolina, arose from the fact that twenty-eight white men, who admitted taking part in the lynching of an imprisoned Negro, were pronounced "Not guilty" by the jury, although the judge, with admirable rectitude, had sternly and emphatically instructed the jury to let no consideration of race deflect them from a true verdict. The verdict "Not guilty" was followed by sordid scenes of frenzied jubilation on the part of the audience while the judge, furious at the jury's defiance of his demand for justice, strode scornfully out of the court. Within a week in a neighboring state an attempt was made to lynch another Negro, but he was rescued by state authorities. Evidence goes to show that the best citizenry of South Carolina were profoundly disturbed by the barrage of condemnation that was heaped upon the Greenville jury and its supporters by uncounted newspapers and other periodicals across the United States. The forces of reaction are immensely powerful in defense of what Myrdal calls false "beliefs with a purpose"; yet the forces of reason and justice are steadily battling within the South against those myths. Increasingly potent and determined organizations of influential leaders are, from many sides, backing up the enlightened elements in the South. This struggle is part of the world-wide combat between the forces of exploitation and of justice. On the outcome of that contest of principles will depend in large part the character of the slowly emerging new global civilization of mankind which will replace in this interdependent world all the old separate civilizations now shaken to their foundations.

For, not in the United States alone, but in every land

where a privileged group, whatever its color, withholds human rights from others, those in control are heading for catastrophe unless they listen to and obey the wisdom embodied in the most famous sentences of Lord Macaulay's Parliamentary Reform speech of 1831:

All history is full of revolutions, produced by causes similar to those now operating in England. A portion of the community which had been of no account expands and becomes strong. It demands a place in the system, suited, not to its former weakness, but to its present power. If this is granted, all is well. If this is refused, then comes the struggle between the young energy of one class and the ancient privileges of another.

In an America where the rising tide of Negro capacity and the will to freedom are being met by stubborn resistance on the part of many, statesmanship rests with those, white and colored, who take counsel from Booker Washington's far-sighted wisdom; and who open the gates of education, industry, social amenities, and self-expression to forces which, if long held back, will break through the dikes, carrying ruin in their train.

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## EPILOGUE

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Booker Washington arrived by his own route at the same truth that gripped Plato when the Greek philosopher declared that political constitutions grow upwards from roots in the lives of men. He was certain that the vitality of a sound civilization is a reverence for every man's personality as a child of God. As his repeated words and acts show, he never despised, as his critics declared, the possession of the right to vote. Again and again he pleaded for it, and he always saw it as a goal greatly to be desired. Rightly or wrongly, however, he was certain that suffrage is the precious fruit and not the essential root of citizenship, a principle that his critics vehemently decried. On the basis of textbook principles and abstract syllogisms the critics of Booker Washington can at times make a more convincing statement than his logic would present. But in the setting of history in the Deep South, in the decades that straddled from the late nineteenth century to the early years of the twentieth, a careful study of the implacable forces of that time makes it clear that any enterprise based on their logic would have been doomed to instant and irredeemable futility. In essence the difference between himself and his critics does not lie in principles, but in his realistic study of priorities. He "cast down his bucket" where he was.

Is there not a convincing basis for the suggestion that Booker Washington's long-term program for placing a depressed people on its feet, as described in this record, was at least half a century ahead of the world around him? Three examples may be put forward in support of this contention.

First, the voting by the British Parliament in the last throes of the Second World War, in 1945, of approximately five hundred million dollars for a ten-year program of development of colonial peoples put into action all across Africa, in the Caribbean Sea, and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, precisely the program that Washington practiced: that of training people in subsistence alongside export agriculture, mechanical engineering, humane education for living, and health service; all as a necessary foundation of advance toward stable political self-government. Second, the self-governing commonwealths in India are driving forward with a similar program of education of some four hundred million people. The reflection is inescapable that, if such an education in agriculture and industrial science and techniques had been developed across India in place of the top-heavy higher education that produced a superabundance of lawyers, journalists, and discontented clerks, the story of her progress toward self-government might have been at once swifter and less tormenting. Third, the shocking picture of oppression, graft, inefficiency, penury, disease, and conflict in Liberia presented in Raymond Buell's authoritative survey<sup>1</sup> is traceable in large part to the failure to carry out on an extensive scale the policy for that land which Booker Washington envisaged in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Washington's practical intuitive mind did not deal in abstract analysis of forces. As a wise creative reformer, he did not merely denounce evil from without; he deliberately set himself to develop in the new generation loyalty to new values. Essentially the distinction between an average mediocre teacher and a great educator lies just there. The pedestrian pedagogue sees books, class-periods, essays, and examina-

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<sup>1</sup> *Liberia: A Century of Survival, 1847-1947* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1947).



tions as an apparatus shaped for graduating students equipped for success in earning a living in a competitive world; the creative teacher, captured by the lure of excellence, deliberately shapes the use of the same tools to inspire persons with the quality of life that makes a better society. That is essentially what Booker Washington set out to do, and in face of as formidable a resistance by active hostility on the one hand, and of sluggish torpor on the other, as ever confronted any educator.

Greater by far than the sum of all Booker Washington's functional achievements was the man himself. The stories told of him by his intimates, and the impression made by him on the crudest and most callow youth as on the most sophisticated statesman, reveal his naive, devastating, peasant wisdom and his almost blinding single-mindedness, in which native shrewdness, elemental saintliness, droll humor, and the pungency of the farmyard were so strangely blended. More brilliant and more scholarly Negro educators, authors, and orators have entered the ranks of leadership; but rarely have they kept that priceless and incommunicable gift of the common touch. This ex-slave boy—as every man, woman and child of his race knew and knows—had won every painful inch of his upward path from poverty-stricken illiteracy by his own fortitude and sheer grit. To the end of his days he remained “racy of the soil,” reveling in the hilarious comradeship of primitive farmers and finding his best relaxation while scratching the back of a favorite sow or weeding his lettuce bed in his shirt sleeves.

For these reasons, and because of the magic of personality that is beyond logic, he was and he remains to uncounted millions of the common people the challenging and bracing incarnation of what each would wish to be, his own archetypal and ideal self.

It seems certain that no leader since Booker Washington has had, or is ever likely to have, the all-embracing authority that he exercised in his prime as referee in tangled issues affecting both races, as adviser to the government in nominations for the services open to Negroes, as guide to education boards, to humanitarian funds, and to men and women of wealth in the generous use of their resources, and as "elder statesman" in propounding and practicing a consistent policy. Today unnumbered responsible leaders of the colored people have been trained by the universities and institutes, and are found in every area, both geographically and functionally. Negro farmers and business and professional men and women; journalists, authors, artists, preachers, and teachers; labor organizers, social workers, lawyers, politicians, and men in the armed forces, are active in the South and in the North as well as on the Pacific slope, where their numbers notably increased during the Second World War. Numerous organizations mobilize their will to work to a common end; some concentrating on action in politics, others in such fields as those of labor, business, education, and health. Henceforth, therefore, the leadership of the colored peoples will almost certainly be less personal and more corporate; a principle which seems likely to hold good not only in America but also in Asia and Africa.<sup>2</sup>

We lay down the biography of a man like Booker Washington conscious that the evils against which he fought have still to be conquered by our own and later generations, that the goal he set remains unattained, and that the way to it is steep and long. In all high endeavor knowledge of the best

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<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, certain writers, especially poets, will emerge from time to time, to requicken, like a Robert Burns among the Scots, a proud sense of unity and dignity among the rank and file. The influence of Langston Hughes in the 1940's is an example of this.

is essential to success. Plato in his *Phaedrus* pictures each human soul before birth moving across heaven being shown Beauty, Justice, Courage, and the other virtues. A man's success, he tells us, depends upon the degree to which, amid the confusions and obstacles of earth, his soul remains loyal to the memory of that vision. No surer way of nourishing that loyalty and carrying forward great enterprises can be found than that described by A. N. Whitehead as "the habitual vision of greatness"—living in the company of a man like Booker Washington, who himself remained steadfastly true to the vision of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness.



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## LIST OF BOOKS BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

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### PRINCIPAL PUBLICATIONS BY BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

- The Future of the American Negro* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1899).
- The Story of My Life and Work* (Naperville, Ill., and Toronto, Ont.: J. L. Nichols and Co., 1900).
- Sowing and Reaping* (Boston: L. C. Page and Co., 1900).
- Up from Slavery* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1901).  
Published serially in the *Outlook* in 1900.
- Character Building* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1902).
- Working with the Hands* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1904).
- Tuskegee and Its People* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1905).
- Putting the Most into Life* (New York: T. Y. Crowell and Co., 1906).
- The Negro in Business* (Boston and Chicago: Hertel, Jenkins and Co., 1907).
- Frederick Douglass* (Philadelphia and London: G. W. Jacobs and Co., 1907).
- The Story of the Negro*, 2 vol. (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1909).
- My Larger Education* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1911).
- The Man Farthest Down* (with Robert E. Park) (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1912).



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